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Bella MONTHLY

DIET SPECIAL

BETTER BODY, BETTER MIND

Kris's new face at 69!

How Stacey got back in her wedding dress

SALTED CARAMEL
Jude's
94

TRIED & TASTED: Low-cal ice creams

Alison & Fern:

STRONG & HEALTHY

The fitness tricks that helped them get slim

BELLA MONTHLY: DIET JUN

Slimming World®

'I've lost almost 10st – look at me now!'

EXTRA MAG INSIDE!

FEEL FABULOUS THIS SUMMER

Recipes

Flattering swimwear

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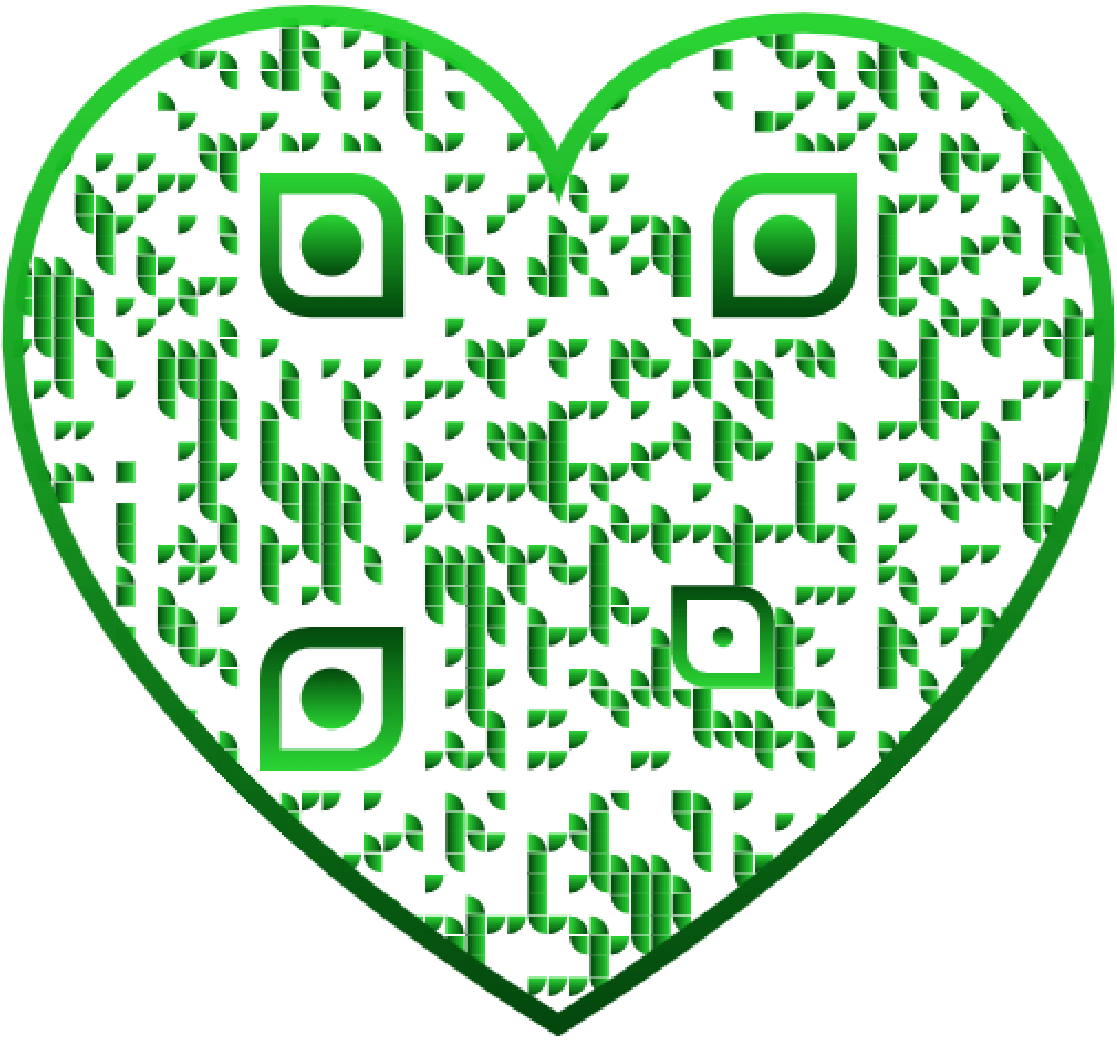
Lose weight, tone up & have fun!



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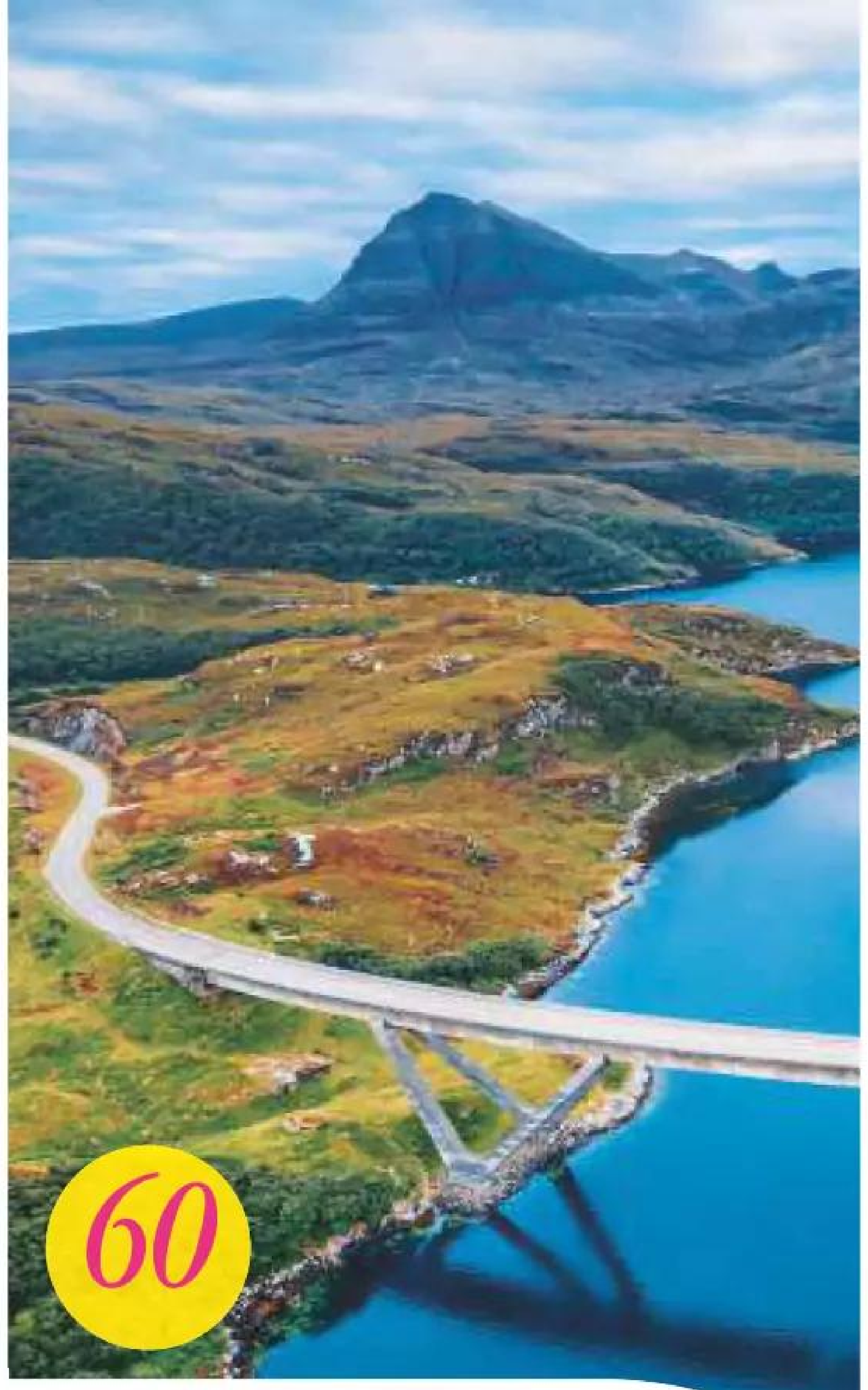

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Sizzle this summer

With summer plans and holidays about to ramp up, we bring you this special issue of *Bella Monthly* – which is all about helping you enjoy the sunshine season fully. From healthy snacks, to our taste test of the best low-cal ice creams, we've got you covered. With six pages of barbecue recipes from Slimming World, plus more healthy recipes, you can still enjoy yourself without sabotaging your wellbeing.

If you want a weight-loss boost, we've got a tasty and filling diet plan from nutritionist Juliette Kellow on page 24, to help you drop a dress size in a month. And if you're getting ready to start packing your suitcase, we've got an incredible round-up of our top flattering swimsuits and bikinis on the high street right now.

Be inspired by our gorgeous pick of women who have transformed their lives and eating habits. And we also shine a spotlight on the celebs who are thriving right now. Find out how Alison Hammond, 50, and Fern Britton, 67, shaped-up, while still feeling strong and healthy.

We've got a walking workout plan, to help you get your steps in and boost your wellbeing, plus check out the Get Great Glutes guide by *Love Island* winner and personal trainer Gabby Allen.

We hope you enjoy!

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By Rachel Jones, **Pictures** M Vittur, Slimming World/Gareth Morgans, Getty, Shutterstock
Cover pics, Edbury Press, Slimming World/Gareth Morgans, Shutterstock, M Vittur

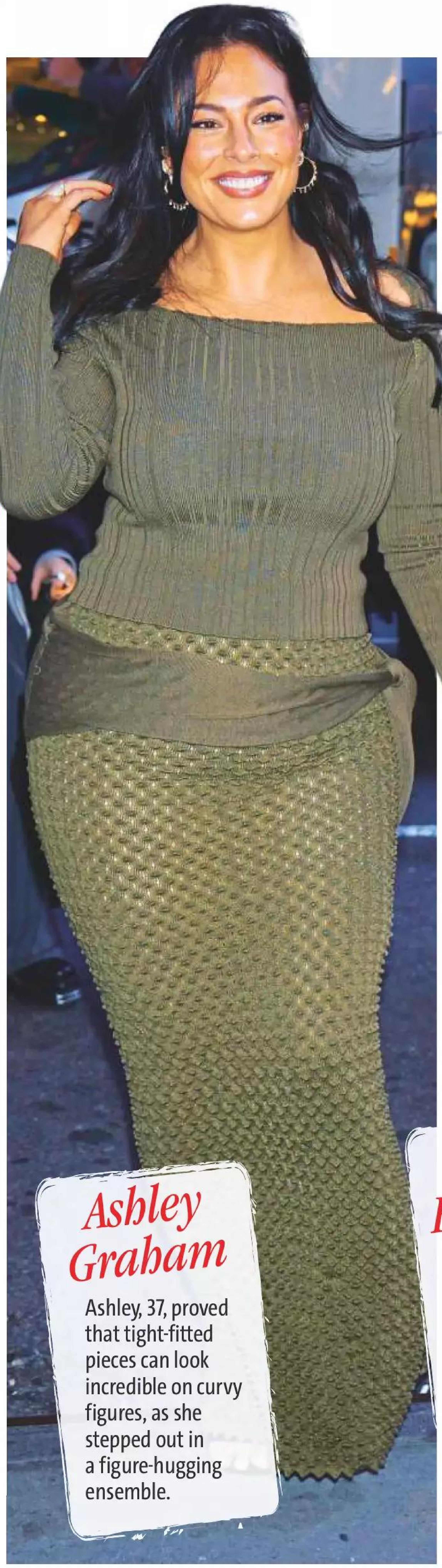
Flattering

Lizzo

Songstress Lizzo, 36, was a sheer delight in a fitted fishtail gown that perfectly accentuated her gorgeous curves.

Eva Longoria

The power sleeve is a great way to play with shape and volume, as seen on *Desperate Housewives* star Eva, 50.



Ashley Graham

Ashley, 37, proved that tight-fitted pieces can look incredible on curvy figures, as she stepped out in a figure-hugging ensemble.

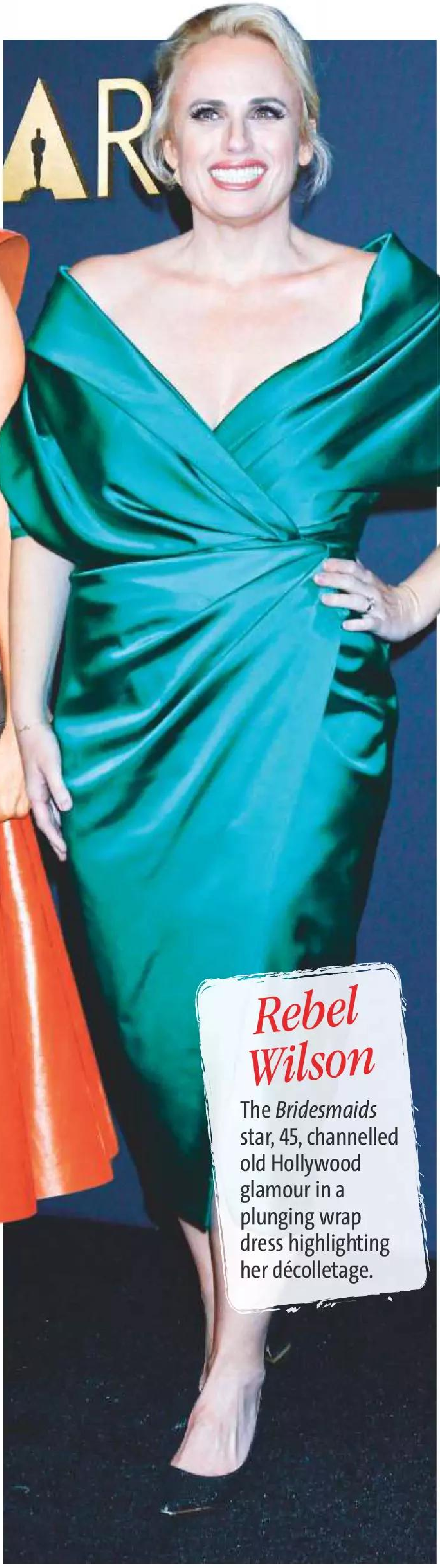
Tracee Ellis Ross

Those with larger hips should take note from Tracee, 52, whose A-line skirt gently skimmed over her lower body.

By Ella Shire, Pictures Alamy

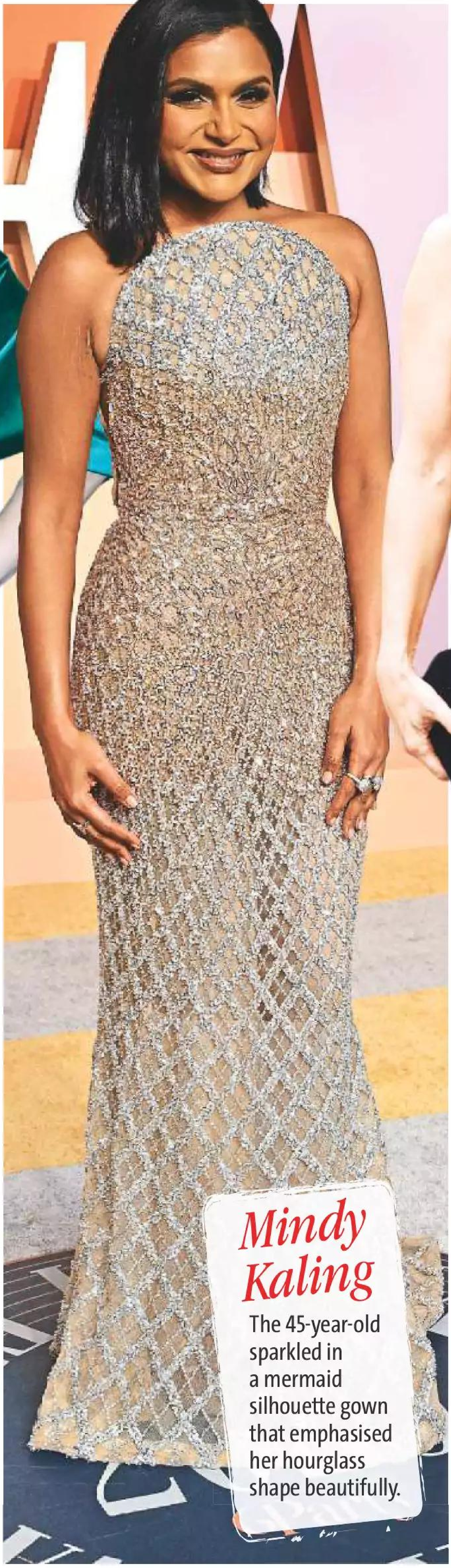
Frocks

These stars know how to dress for their shape



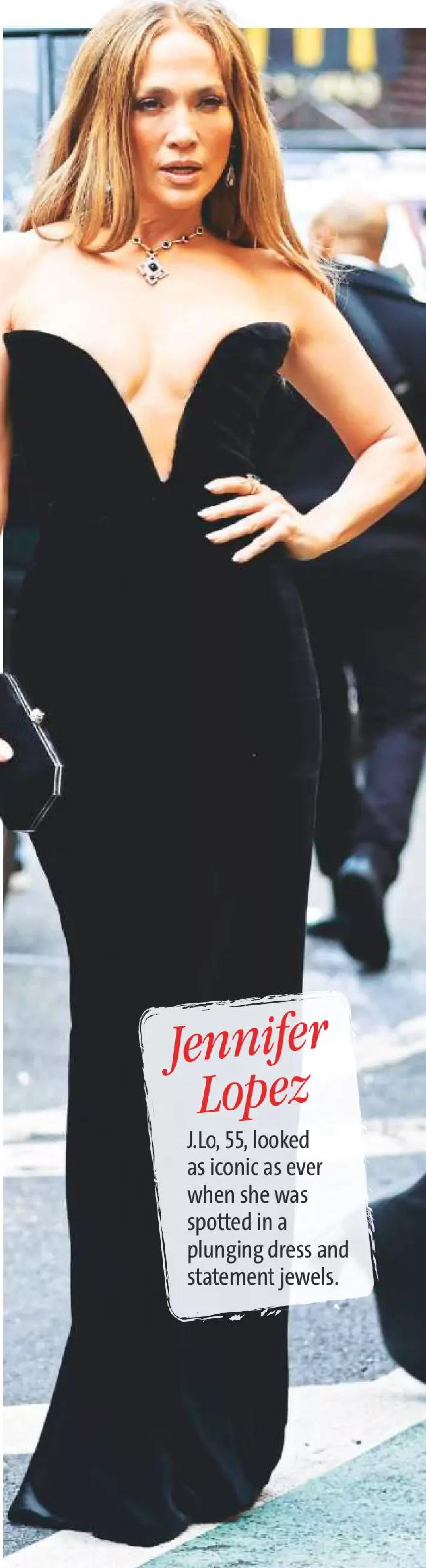
Rebel Wilson

The *Bridesmaids* star, 45, channelled old Hollywood glamour in a plunging wrap dress highlighting her décolletage.



Mindy Kaling

The 45-year-old sparkled in a mermaid silhouette gown that emphasised her hourglass shape beautifully.



Jennifer Lopez

J.Lo, 55, looked as iconic as ever when she was spotted in a plunging dress and statement jewels.

FITNESS SPECIAL

Good Karma
Club

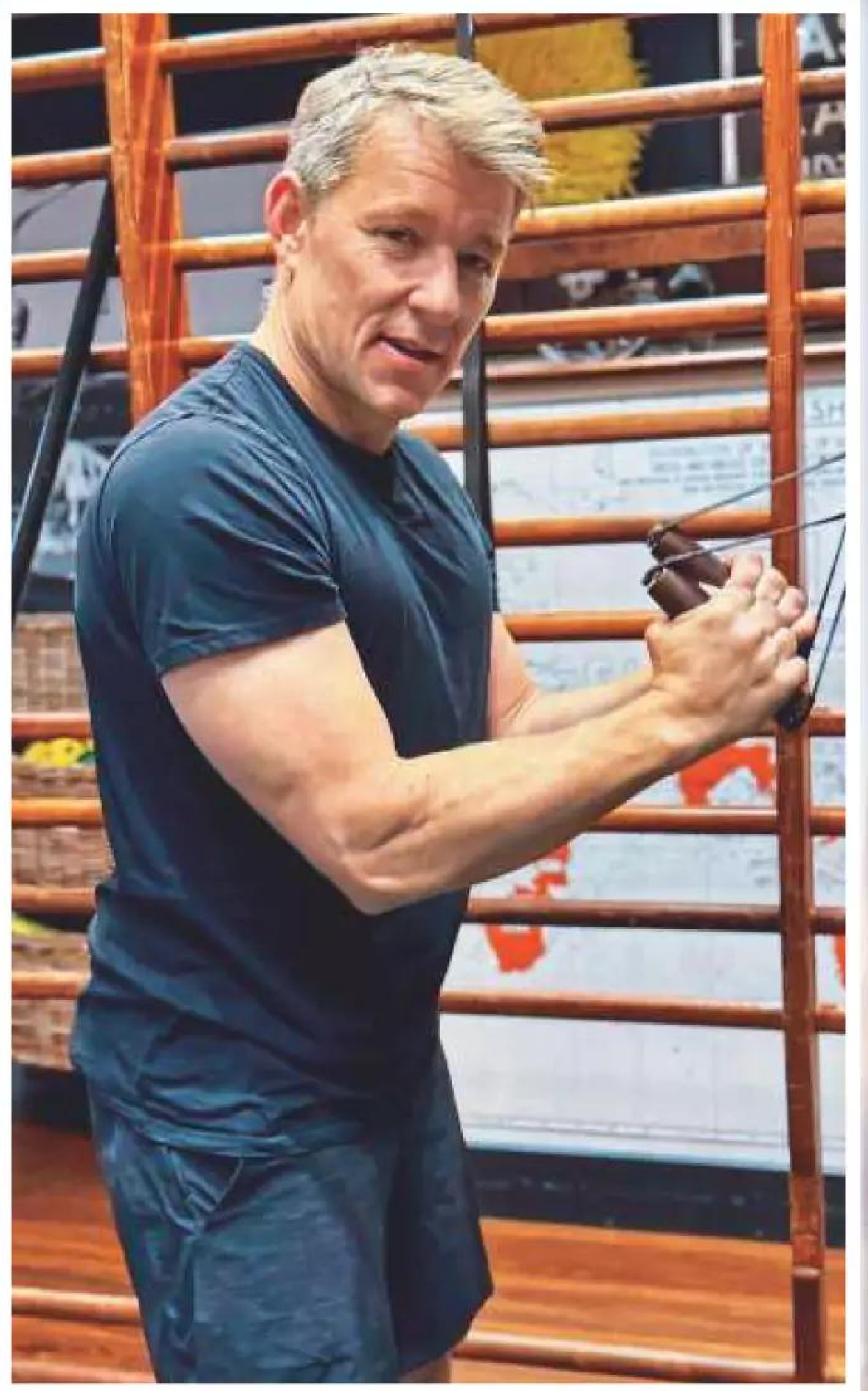
'Yoga makes me feel good'

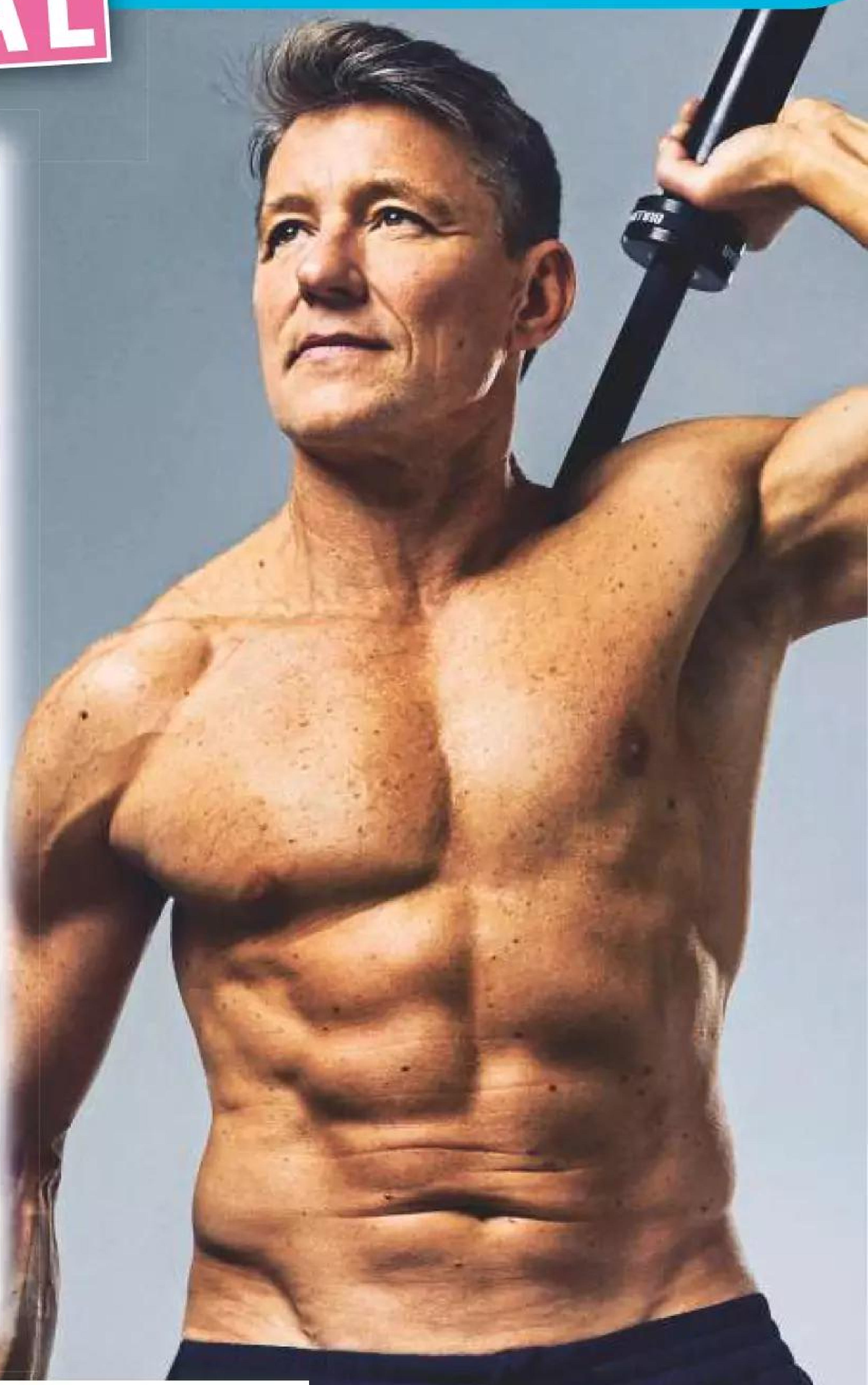
Being a pro dancer on *Strictly*, there's no doubt that Dianne Buswell is super fit.

Dianne, 36, won *Strictly* last year with comedian Chris McCausland, after being in the final twice before that, and the secret to her success isn't just putting in endless hours on the dance floor.

She told *Bella*, 'I do a lot of yoga and Pilates. The way I feel my best is when I look after myself the best – so when I get really good sleep, when I do my yoga in the morning. I do try to really look after myself because it makes me feel good mentally, and also physically. It's a no-brainer.'

Dianne is also a keen cook, and often shares recipes on her social media. She says, 'I try and feed myself well. I love cooking fresh foods from fresh ingredients.'





BEN'S BEST BOD AT 50!

The *This Morning* presenter has found getting fit easier with age

TV presenter Ben Shephard hit his big 50th birthday last year, and his fifth decade looks great on him.

He recently stripped down and showed off his bod for the cover of *Men's Health* and readers couldn't believe the muscles that have been hiding on the *This Morning* sofa.

Ben was recreating a cover that he did 13 years ago and said getting fit actually 'came a little easier this time'. Talking about how his exercise goals have shifted as he's grown older, Ben said, 'To get stronger, physically and mentally, is definitely harder the older you get. 'In my 40s, I was still on the attack. In my 50s, I'm on the defensive. It's all about how I prolong things now – not going out and smashing it left, right and centre.'

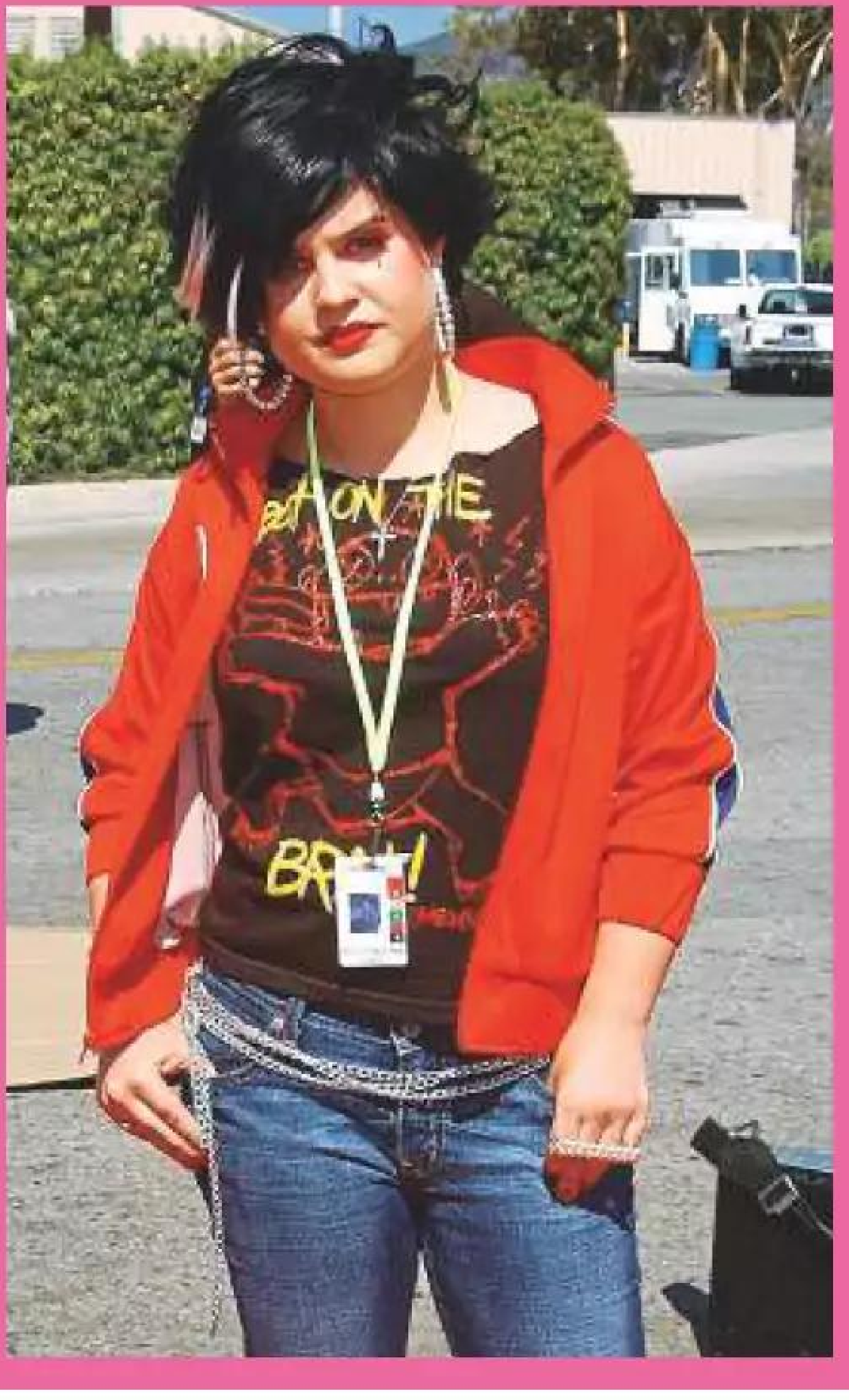
Ben shares sons Sam and Jack with his wife Annie Perks, and he loves showing them he's still up to the challenge when it comes to fitness. He said, 'I've really, really enjoyed proving to my 18-year-old and 19-year-old sons that I can still compete with them. We love training together. And when they say I look like I've trained hard... they've been really inspired by that, particularly my eldest, Sam.'

Men's Health
ESCAPE THE GYM
21
THIS IS 50!
BEN SHEPHARD
THE NEW HYROX
BUZZ KILL

And while there's no specific secret that has kept Ben so ripped, he said that consistency is key and 'just turning up and being accountable'. But it's not all about working out, as he said that 'abs really are made in the kitchen!'

● *The full interview is available in the June issue of Men's Health UK, on sale now'*

KELLY'S WEIGHT WOES

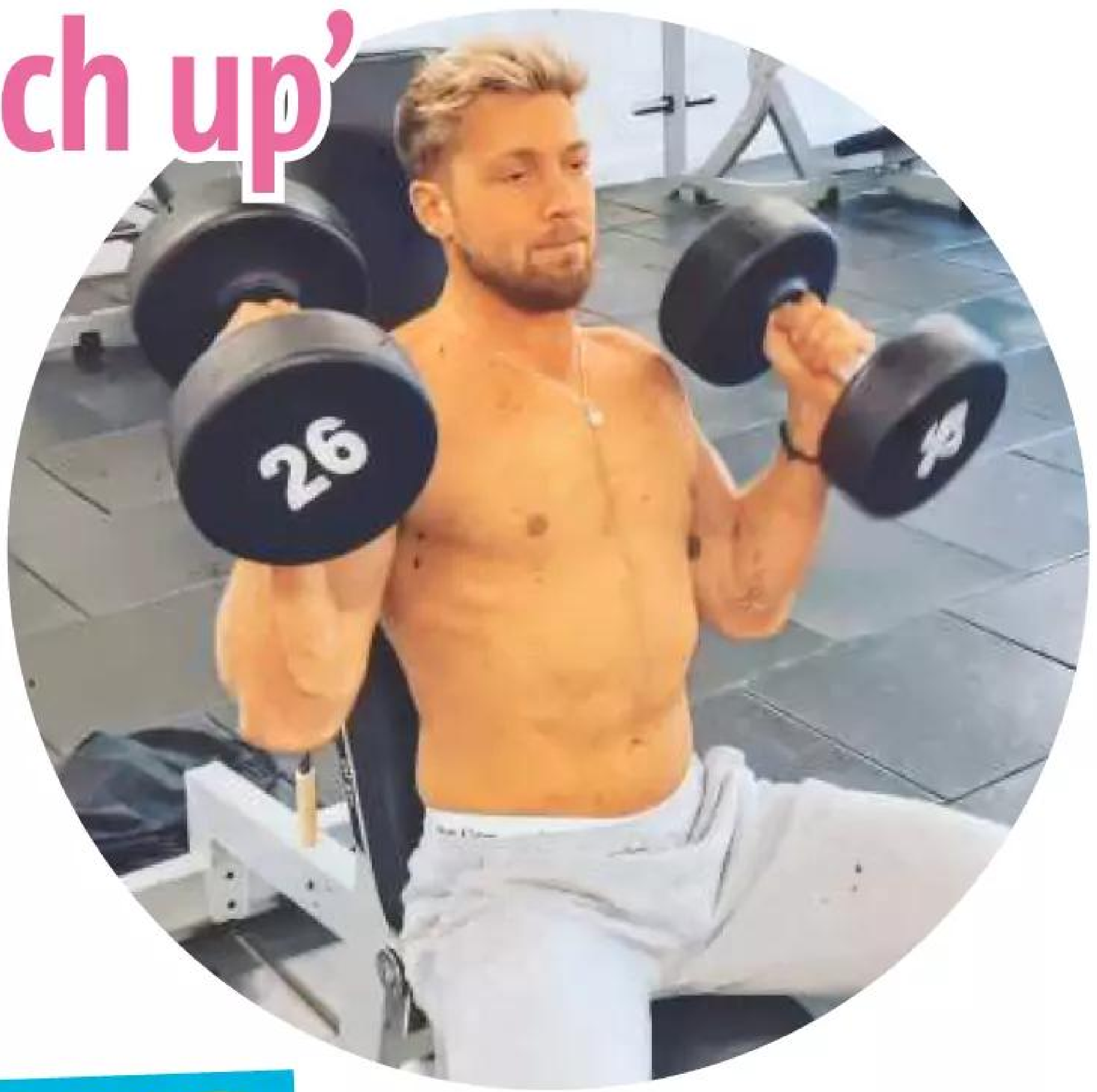


Kelly Osbourne has lost an incredible 85lb, but her lifelong weight struggles have been a topic of public discussion for years.

She was even told to lose weight by agents in the 2000s when she starred in her family reality show, *At Home with the Osbournes*, and now, she has hit out on the world as being 'fat-phobic'.

Kelly, 40, said, 'I have been a drug addict, an alcoholic... I've been a complete mess, disrespectful to people, horrible – but I got more s*** for being fat than I did for anything else. It's insane.'

40-min gym 'touch up'



Sam Thompson recently ran a mammoth 260 miles in five days for Soccer Aid, but as well as training with lots of running, the *Made in Chelsea* star also prepared in the gym, even if it wasn't for long periods of time.

Sam, 32, said he spends 'no more than an hour a day, if that' at the gym.' He confessed, 'It's more like 40 minutes. I get bored easily. I give myself what I call a touch-up. You go in there just to make yourself feel alright, and then you leave. It hasn't really done anything, it's just a touch-up.'

By Amy Lo, **Pictures** Instagram, David Venni / Men's Health UK Getty

Judy's summer look

Judy Finnigan has kept a low profile since stepping back from presenting duties on TV in 2018.

But she was glowing in a recent rare appearance, when daughter Chloe Madeley shared a photo of Judy for her 77th birthday. Judy was beaming as she posed in a colourful floral dress, perfect for summer, after she lost around two stone with personal trainer Chloe's help.

Chloe also shared snaps of her dad, Richard Madeley, throughout the birthday celebrations and fans loved this rare sighting of Judy, with many wishing her a happy birthday and one person commenting, 'What a beautiful smile', while another said, 'Doesn't your mum look wonderful!'

WEEK IN PICS

Island relaxing

Big Brother presenter AJ Odudu, 37, looked happy and relaxed as she enjoyed a Pilates retreat in Ibiza. Sharing photos from her trip posing in her cossie, paddle-boarding and working out in gymwear, AJ said she felt 'rested and sculpted'.

Blue beauty

Game of Thrones star Sophie Turner, 29, looked incredible in a turquoise bikini on a friend's recent hen do. The actor looked like she had the time of her life with friends as she shared photos at a beach club and singing at karaoke.

Sexy Salma

Actor Salma Hayek gave a behind-the-scenes sneak peek of her *Sports Illustrated* photo shoots, where she looked phenomenal in various bikinis. The 58-year-old said it was 'one of the most fun shoots of my life', which took place in her home country of Mexico.

Fern & Alison: SECRETS B

How they got healthy and strong in the prime of their lives

Alison: 'I eat everything in moderation'

After giving her diet and fitness an overhaul, Alison Hammond is in the best shape of her life. The *This Morning* and *Bake Off* presenter, who turned 50 in February, has lost 13.5st through regular workouts and a balanced diet, thus reversing a pre-diabetic diagnosis. 'I've lost a lot of weight. I can remember being nearly 30 stone, and now I'm in the 17-16½ stone range,' she said.

Alison – who was a size 28 at her heaviest – credited her personal trainer for keeping her motivated and on track. 'She's amazing. She trains me when I can train. If I'm working, I don't train, I'll go for a walk. But when I'm at home, I'll go and have a session with her in the morning, just an hour. It might be four days a week.'

When it comes to her diet, she revealed, 'I don't deny myself anything. I eat everything, but in moderation,' adding that she still tucks into a full English breakfast of eggs, bacon and sausages, followed by her favourite Caribbean foods of curried goat and rice or chicken fried rice for dinner.

The former *Big Brother* star has struggled with her weight for years. 'I've had obesity all my life. You can't control wanting to eat all the time. A lot of people don't realise – obesity is a disease,' she explained.

Alison appeared on *Celebrity Fit Club* in 2004, before having a gastric band fitted in 2007. She had it reversed three years later when her body rejected it. In 2017, she took part in reality show *Sugar Free Farm*, where she lost 2st after cutting out the white stuff from her diet. But it wasn't until her mother's death in 2020 from lung and liver cancer that she got serious about losing weight so she could enjoy more time with her son Aidan, 20.

'It scared me because my mum had type 2 diabetes and I want to be there for my son. I've never had health issues until then,' she said. 'My mum was worried for me, so when I found out that I was pre-diabetic, that was frightening. I thought, "I have to be an adult about this". The sweets had to stop – and the fatty foods.'

Now loved up with Russian masseur David Putnam, 27, Alison vows that her new slimmer shape is here to stay. 'I feel amazing. I feel happy within myself,' she said.

Alison in 2014

EHIND THEIR SHAPE-UPS

Fern: 'Slow and steady works for me'

Fern Britton's been looking fit and fabulous in recent months – and it's all down to a new lifestyle. Rather than relying on fast fixes, the star has embraced a healthier and more active way to maintain her weight loss.

Her efforts are certainly working as Fern, 67, showed off the impressive results this spring. Sharing a photo of herself in cycling shorts with a mirror selfie, in her home gym alongside an assortment of weights, she said, 'REPOWERING after a sloth like winter.' Fans complimented her, with one commenting, 'You look incredible Fern! All the hard work has paid off. Fitness never felt so good!' Another remarked, 'You're a wonderful role model. Really inspiring.'

After taking up cycling again last summer following a shoulder injury, the keen cyclist upped her exercise regime in January to include running, walking and lifting weights along with cycling. She previously completed the Couch to 5K challenge before her appearance on *Celebrity Big Brother* in March 2024.

'New year, new fitness regime. I've started running again and gone back to Couch to 5K. I shall start running again, two or three times a week, and I'm going to start cycling again and will do some weights to get my arms and shoulder a bit stronger again,' she said.

Cornwall native Fern – who has completed various cycling challenges in the past – also revealed her next goal. 'Later on in the year I'll be walking a small leg of the south-west coast, parts which will take about a week to do. I'm in training,' she said.

Fern, who used to present *This Morning*, lost 5st after having a gastric band fitted in 2006 when she was a reported size 22. 'It helped me lose a lot of weight while exercising regularly and eating good, wholesome food. However, in my era of indolence, not only did I stop exercising, I also stopped eating well,' she revealed.

After battling with her weight for the past two decades, Fern – who split from second husband Phil Vickery in 2020 after 22 years of marriage – has discovered her key to slimming down: hard work and patience. Alongside Couch to 5K, she ate more protein and vegetables and swapped unhealthy snacks for healthier options – and quit smoking. 'The slow and steady approach is a great confidence builder,' she revealed.

Fern in 2006

By Shereen Low, **Pictures:** Alamy, Instagram, Shutterstock

Looking than eve

Stacey's commitment to health

Mum-of-five Stacey Solomon has been on a mission to get fit and healthy over the past year, and her hard work shows as she has been looking incredible. Stacey, 35, recently managed to get back into a reworked version of her wedding dress to attend the TV BAFTAs, after she vowed to make 2024 her 'f***-it year' and to focus on herself.

She's confessed she put her passions on hold as she prioritised her kids. Stacey has Rex, five, Rose, three, and Belle, two, with husband Joe Swash, plus Zachary, 17, and Leighton, 12, from previous relationships. Last year, she threw herself into regular running sessions and workouts, saying, 'I want to feel athletic again, because I did feel really unhealthy.'

She's been working with her personal trainer, her sister Samantha Stone, and hopes that the exercise she's doing now will help 'protect' herself from any mobility issues as she grows older – a problem her mum Fiona is dealing with now. Stacey continued to 'commit' to her healthier lifestyle as earlier this year she posted a photo of herself in a crop top and leggings, saying, 'Tomorrow morning before the kids get up, I'm going for my first run of 2025. I've said it now [so] I have to commit.' Looking fab, Stace!

Susanna: 'No and no booze'

Good Morning Britain presenter Susanna Reid has dropped over a stone and has revealed that she's done it without ever setting foot inside a gym. Susanna, 54, previously said, 'I stopped going to the gym, I found it made me too hungry. I've levelled out, I lost a stone-and-a-half and that's enough, and I don't go to the gym.'

However, shortly after, she revealed, 'I was at the upper end of my BMI, and I have to admit, I'd been feeling a little heavy for a while.' Her 4am wake-up calls for *GMB* meant that she had a tendency to snack and added 'you can pile [weight] on really quickly'.

BEAUTIFUL THING

better
er!

These TV stars share how they look so great

gym

But Susanna has followed a pescatarian diet and has been mostly teetotal since 2019, after her diet was often causing flare-ups in her skin. And while she doesn't go to the gym, she has completed two marathons, two Great North Runs and lots of 10k races. And the star admits, 'I feel fantastic.'

Charlie's Pilates and cake

Celebrity workout DVDs were all the rage in the '00s, and Charlie Brooks had her own successful Before and After DVD, where she lost two stone in two months. But Charlie, 43, has since said that despite getting 'really tiny' it had a 'long-term negative impact on my body image.' These days she has a more balanced approach. She's been seen enjoying Reformer Pilates and went through relentless training for *Dancing on Ice* 2025. However, she revealed she would 'never stop eating cake'. In 2020, the mum-of-one gave up alcohol, which 'turned out to be a massive part of a transformative few years'. Just before her 43rd birthday, she shared a video of herself looking amazing in her bikini, saying she never used to wear bikinis as she was 'too self conscious' but now she's 'being gentle' with herself.

Lorraine's secret gastric sleeve

EastEnders actor Lorraine Stanley has had an incredible transformation, showing off a slimmed-down physique over the past year since she left the soap. She has since revealed that the huge change in her figure was down to a gastric sleeve, after a fan asked her what her weight-loss secret was. Lorraine, 48, first shared her transformation in March 2024, when she revealed that she had lost five stone in a year in a before and after photo with the caption, 'What a difference a year makes! Five stone down, feeling good, clean living, healthy choices, new me, healthy mummy.' Lorraine – who has daughter Nancy, nine, with husband Mark – has made efforts to be healthier before.

She's also shared a photo flexing her bicep post-workout with her personal trainer, Louise Appel, saying, 'I'm feeling fantastic! #fitat40something #igotthis' You certainly do, Lorraine!

Carol: 'I do 8k steps by the morning'

BBC weather woman Carol Kirkwood always brightens up our screens and has been glowing lately. Last summer, Carol, 62, shared that she had refreshed her style after losing weight and being able to fit back into some of her old favourite clothes. Carol likes to keep fit in a variety of ways. She previously took part in Couch to 5K and enjoys swimming and cycling.

Staying on top of her fitness regime is a priority for Carol, who previously said, 'I try to be careful about my weight. I know people say don't weight yourself every day, but I do.' And it seems like the reason Carol looks so fabulous is because she's consistent. Even with a busy schedule presenting the news on the BBC, Carol makes each minute count in the morning, saying, 'I'm so busy during my shift, I have trainers on. I run from the TV studio to the radio because I am on every 15 minutes. I think I do about six to eight thousand steps every morning.'

By Amy Lo, **Pictures** Getty, Shutterstock, Alamy Stock Photo, Instagram

Kerry: 'This is the best shape I've been in'

The ex-Atomic Kitten star has never felt better

Anyone that knows Kerry Katona understands she has been on a journey with her body. However, as she approaches her 45th birthday in September, it's clear she's looking – and feeling – better than ever.

She spent the end of last year in back-to-back pantomimes and navigating a split from her boyfriend of six years, Ryan Mahoney – and she was so busy that it seems she didn't quite realise how much weight she had dropped, thanks to a new regime of yoga, workouts and eating better.

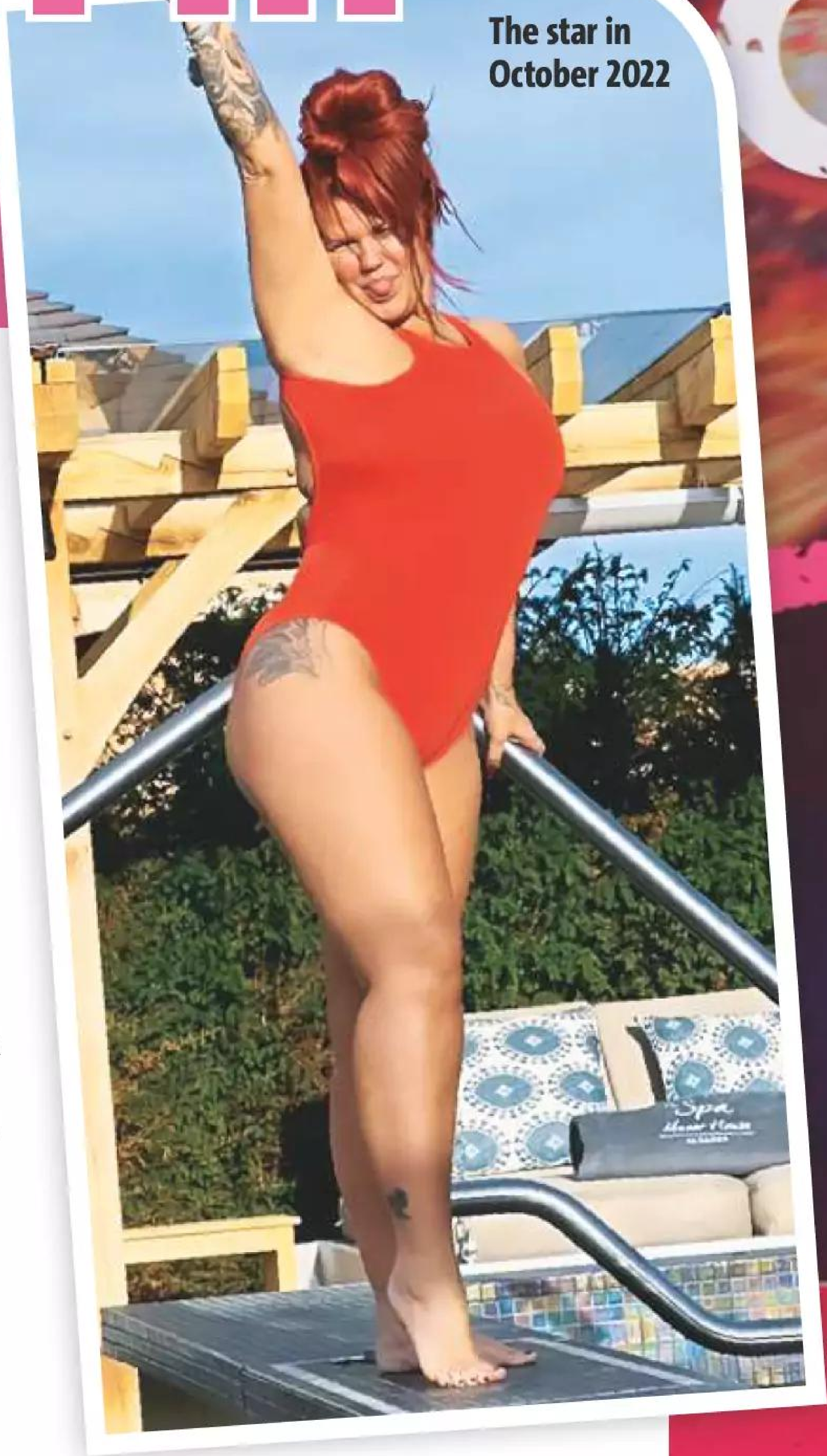
> 'I try to be my best version'

'It's been so full on, I had no idea how slim I was until I put on my size 12 jeans at the start of the year. They were so loose! I've gone down to a size 8 and I'm just over 9 stone. I'm slimmer now than I was in Atomic Kitten. I'm getting there emotionally, but physically this is the best shape I've been in!'

M-FIT
FITNESS & NUTRITION

Kerry is proud of her new figure

Kerry has since been seen in gorgeous bikinis on a long holiday to Thailand, where she enjoyed showing off her newly trim physique, saying she was 'living her best life'.



The star in October 2022

Mum to Molly, 23, Lilly-Sue, 22, Heidi, 19, Max, 17, and DJ, 11, Kerry has also battled addiction issues in the past – something she says is now behind her.

She told *Closer* magazine, 'I try to be the best version of myself every day. I don't drink, or do drugs, and I take CBD oil regularly, my only vice is that I vape. I get up at 5am every morning, I do yoga, say my gratitude and meditate. I'm a completely different person to who I used to be.

'People think yoga is just a bit of breathing but if you do it properly your body hurts all over. I've been doing planks and sit-ups to improve my core, and aerobic workouts for cardio. During Panto,

Working out on the beach

we did three shows a day back-to-back and I kid you not it was so physically demanding, I was burning so many calories. I start the day with ginger and turmeric shots and try to eat healthily – it's not rocket science! If you're going to eat a bacon butty with a sh*t load of chips, you'll feel rubbish.'

It's fair to say she's thrilled with how she looks now. 'I look in the mirror, do a double take and think, "That's a great picture, I should hang it on the wall,"' she laughs. 'I feel blessed I look and feel as good as I do, especially now perimenopause is creeping up.'

And while some celebs are turning to weight-loss jabs, Kerry is not one of them – at least for now. 'I've been there, done that years ago,' she says. 'I'm not on them now, but if I end up putting all the weight back on, I'll be bang on those injections!'

And as she continues to rebuild her life following her break-up, Kerry admits her weight loss has had another unexpected bonus – her work on the subscriber service OnlyFans, on which she posts sexy pictures for those willing to pay. 'OnlyFans is way more fun now,' she laughs. 'I went to M&S to get remeasured, and I bought loads of sexy underwear – I've never been a 34D before in my life. The only thing is when I take my bra off and bend down, my boobs look like an orangutans with all the saggy skin! I could trip over my own nipples, so I have to pose in a way that makes them look good.'

'OnlyFans is way more fun'

Meanwhile, despite sharing plans of her facelift recently, Kerry has postponed the procedure until later in the year. 'The kids were saying, "Mum, you don't need it,"' she explains. 'I thought, you know what, I'm not looking that bad. I still want it but only when I have the time to recover. When people criticise me and say I should be a role model, I say, "Listen sweetheart, I've had five kids, I'll do what I want to my own body." I'm 44 not 24 and I'm ageing. I've got a fatty turkey neck, and I want it gone, I'd love a tighter jaw and neck like the Kardashians!'

Keep it up, Kerry!

Doing yoga at home

By Stephen Leng, **Pictures** IMAGO/Capital Pictures Instagram

The Kardas
Make

How the world's most famous family have changed over the years

Kylie: 'I've only had fillers!'

We were first introduced to the youngest of the Kardashian-Jenner tribe, Kylie Jenner, 27, when the family's reality show *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* launched in 2007. Appearing on the series aged just nine, Kylie grew up on our screens and has received endless comments about her looks ever since. After years of denying a surgery-fuelled glow up, Kylie revealed in an episode in 2023 that she had gone under the knife at the age of 19, getting a boob job.

Since becoming a mum in 2019, Kylie has been more open about her enhancements. 'I think a big misconception about me is that I've had so much surgery on my face, but I've only had fillers', she said.

Alongside her sister Khloé in an episode of family reality show, Kylie revealed that she is now in a better place with her appearance, after battling with insecurities driven by comments from family members and social media. These days, the mum of two enjoys regular workouts at her home gym three times a week with her personal trainer, and enjoys long hikes with her children.

hian over

Khloé: 'Society gave me insecurities'

Between the Kardashians and the Jenners, Khloé Kardashian, 40, has arguably faced the harshest scrutiny over her appearance. 'Society gave me insecurities,' she once admitted during a candid chat with sisters Kourtney and Kylie. Regularly compared to her siblings, Khloé has been honest about feeling 'not good enough' and how that pushed her to evolve her look.

Over the past decade, Khloé's undergone a serious transformation, losing 40lbs as part of a focused, 10-year health and fitness journey. Following her split from ex-husband Lamar Odom, the Good American founder made a lifestyle overhaul, becoming a gym regular and turning her pain into power. She's up at 4.30am for workouts and manages to squeeze in five sessions a week, while juggling solo motherhood to True, seven, and Tatum, two.

Khloé has been open about trying Botox (which she says didn't go too well), getting a nose job, and having other non-surgical injections. While the internet speculates, one thing's for sure is that she worked hard for her glow up and still makes time to champion body confidence for everyone else along the way.

Kim: 'I'm at peace with not being perfect'

With her hourglass figure and perfectly contoured features, Kim has sparked countless debates about what's real and what's been enhanced. Though she's long denied going under the knife for a Brazilian Butt Lift or facelift, she's been open about smaller tweaks like Botox, laser treatments, and even having her belly button tightened. Yes, really.

Famously once saying she'd 'eat poop' if it meant staying young, Kim's obsession with perfection was once part of her brand. But now, aged 44, there's been a noticeable shift. 'I'm at peace with not being perfect,' she revealed, though she still admits she probably cares more about her looks than the average person.

Kim still works hard for her look, squeezing in intense workouts and sticking to a tight skincare and wellness routine. But these days, she's more about refinement than reinvention, avoiding the 'overfilled' look and embracing a more natural (by Kardashian standards) look.

Kris's new look

Kris Jenner, 69, might just be ageing backwards. The Kardashian-Jenner matriarch sparked serious confusion recently after stepping out in Paris looking more like her daughter Kim than, well, herself. Fans were floored by her latest Instagram posts with comments like, 'You're telling me this ISN'T Kim?' – and honestly, we can see why!

Kris has never been shy about having a few tweakments here and there. She's previously owned up to Botox, fillers, a neck lift and having her breast implants removed, but her most recent appearance has fuelled fresh whispers about a possible facelift – in addition to a new, slightly longer hairstyle than she has usually sported.

Of course, it's not all just clever contouring and a great surgeon. Kris works out regularly with her daughters and swears by her positive outlook. In 2022, she said, 'As I get older – and I had a hip replacement this year – you realise how lucky you are to be healthy and overcome some of these things that happen health wise.'

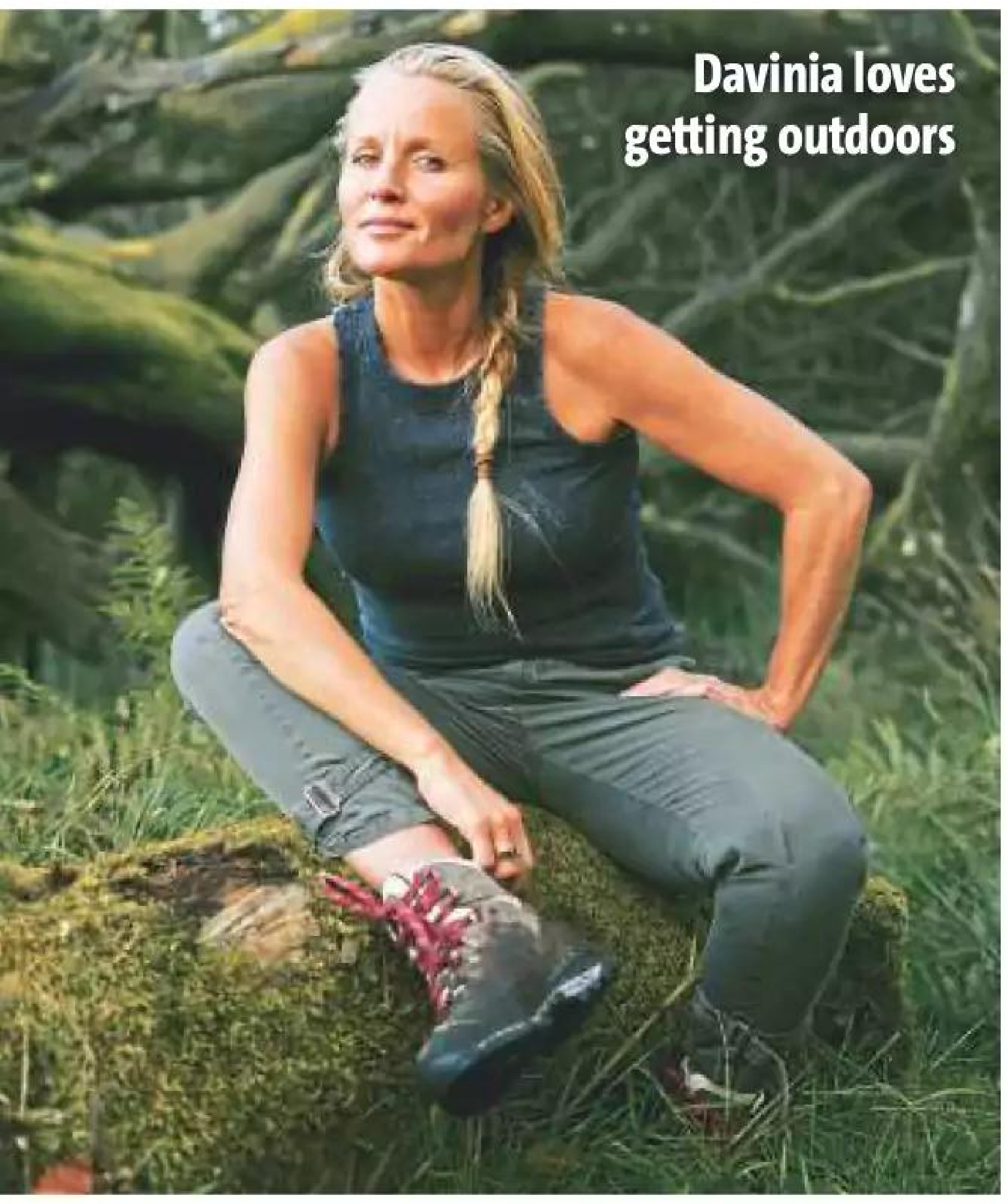
By Afia Kufuor, **Pictures** Instagram, Getty

Davinia: 'Don't be scared to lift weights!'

The actor turned wellness guru reveals how to get your best ever body

Weights are a big part of her routine

Many may remember Davinia Taylor as Jude Cunningham back in the heyday of *Hollyoaks* in the late '90s. However – bar a brief return in 2016 – the 47-year-old star is now better known for her incredible fitness empire, which includes books, 1.2 million Instagram followers, and being a mum to four boys.


Davinia loves getting outdoors

Here, we find out how she looks so good – and how you can too.

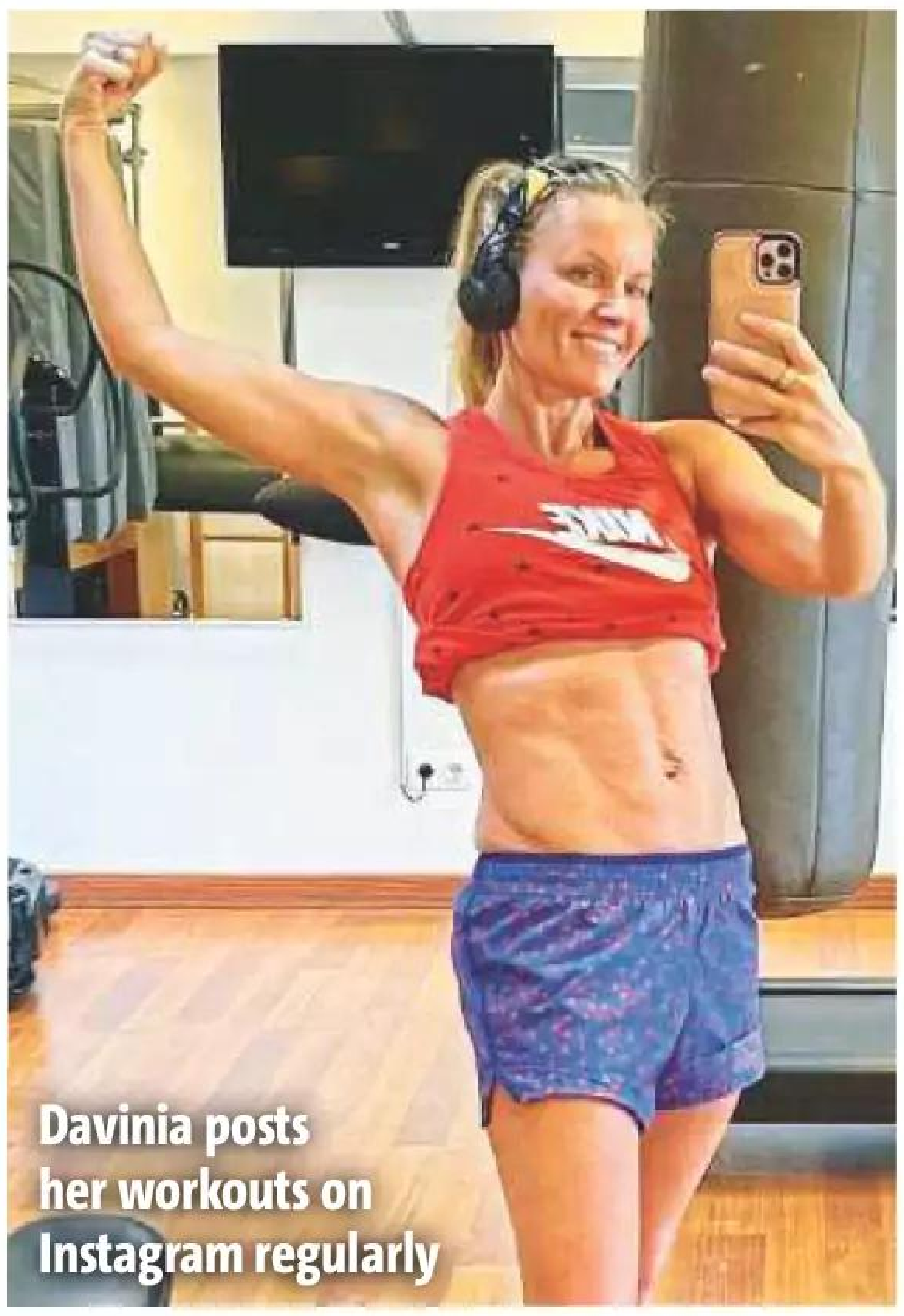
You're a big advocate of lifting weights, aren't you?

If you want to live a long, healthy life with a strong immune system and a sharp mind, building muscle is an essential. For too long, women have been told that gaining muscle means getting bigger, bulkier, or somehow less feminine. That outdated mindset has done real damage. The truth? Muscle is metabolically active tissue that burns carbohydrates for fuel, so if you like carbs, the more muscle you have, the better your body is at using them efficiently. Muscle is denser than fat and takes up less space in the body, so adding lean muscle actually makes you appear more toned. Even without a gym membership, you can start making gains. Building muscle is one of the smartest, most empowering things you can do for your body, mind and future.

> 'Building muscle is key'

What about if you're a busy person?

You don't need a full workout to reap the benefits of movement – micro-habits throughout the day can make a huge difference, especially if you're working from home. One simple trick? Move your bin to another room. It might sound silly, but even standing up to walk a few extra steps encourages blood flow, gets your lymphatic system moving and boosts your brainpower. If your bin is outside or in another room, it also gives you the perfect excuse for a



Davinia posts her workouts on Instagram regularly

Shaking things up with some yoga

daylight break, which does wonders for clearing brain fog. Other easy wins? Try standing on one leg while putting on your socks to improve your balance. Or do a little heel raise while waiting for the kettle to boil. These tiny tweaks add up and help keep your body active in the background of your day.

Talk us through your morning routine?

One of the first things I do every morning is step outside and look up at the sky. It might be cloudy, but that doesn't matter because even on overcast days, daylight is powerful. That natural light triggers a message from my eyes to the rest of my system: 'It's morning – time to wake up!' This helps kickstart cortisol production. Cortisol often gets a bad rap because it's labelled the 'stress hormone', but it's actually essential for healthy function. It helps regulate your immune system, gets your body moving and, most importantly, pulls you out of sleep. So, if you want to feel more awake and energised, daylight is your best and cheapest tool.

> 'Tiny tweaks add up'

And what about in the evening?

For me, winding down is a mix of clever carbohydrates, strategic supplements, and a bit of marshmallow-brain TV. I stick to protein and healthy fats during the day – things like meat or biltong – because they fuel the brain without taxing digestion. But come evening, I switch gears and bring in the carbs. Carbohydrates trigger serotonin production, which then converts into melatonin – the hormone that helps you sleep. The post-carb 'coma' is real, and at 6pm or 7pm, it's exactly what you want. Think roasted sweet potatoes, rice, or even a slice of sourdough with dinner. Then there's light. I know having a TV in your bedroom is a no-no, but I've got a house full of kids and zero extra space, so I make it work. I watch TV in bed with blue light-blocking glasses on. You don't need the big orange ones; Amazon has plenty of subtler, yellow-tinted pairs that do the trick. They help reduce the white/blue light exposure that can mess with your melatonin levels and delay sleep.

How do you deal with anxiety?

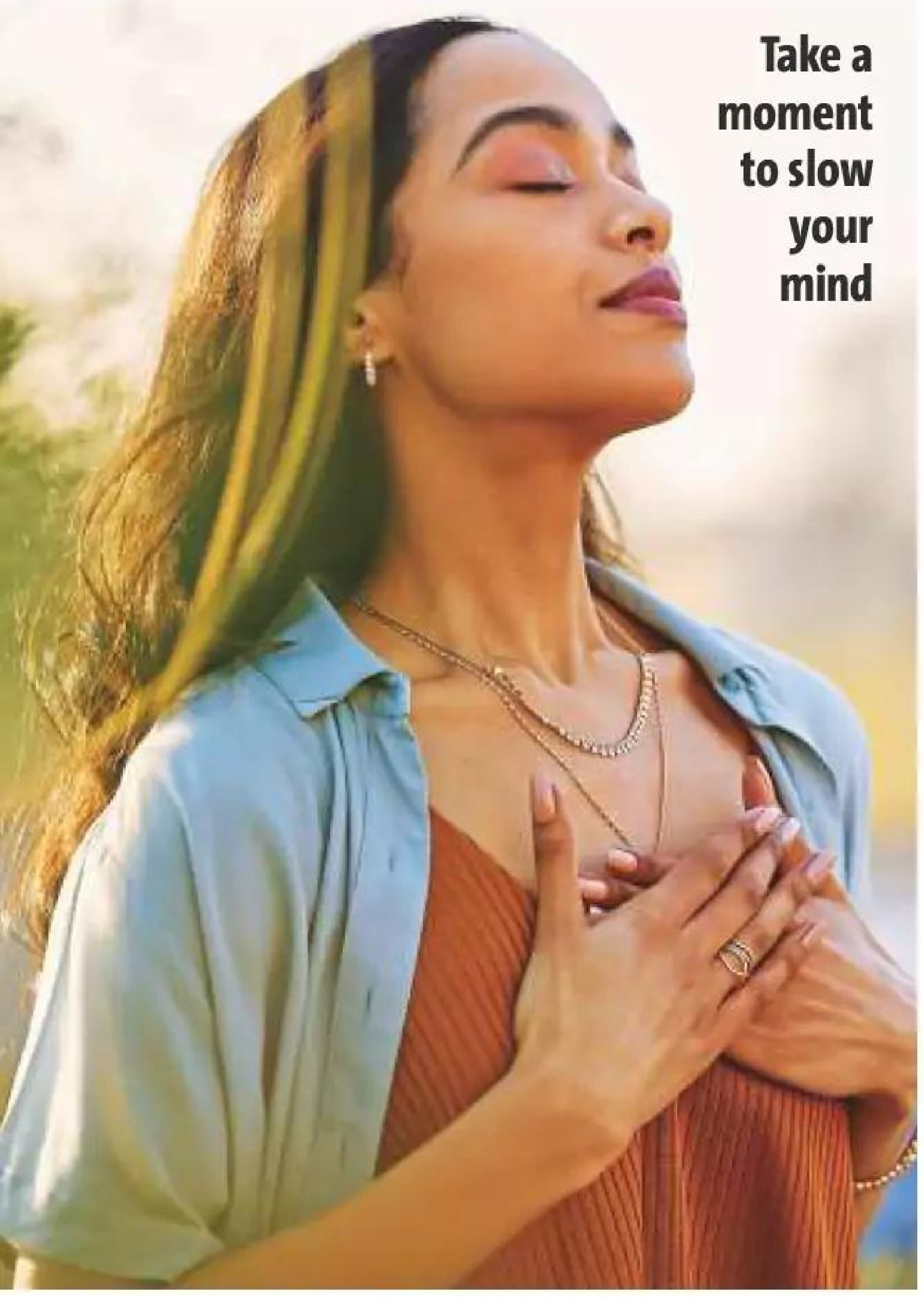
If you struggle with anxious thoughts or find yourself making endless mental to-do lists before bed, a dose of collagen, around 10-15g, in a chamomile tea can work wonders. Chamomile contains apigenin, a natural compound that promotes relaxation. For daytime calm without drowsiness, I love L-theanine, an amino acid found in green and black tea. I also sell it under the name Calm on my website. It takes the edge off, helps you focus, and won't knock you out. It's ideal for that constant background hum of stress we all seem to carry.

● *Futureproof by Davinia Taylor is out now. RRP £16.99 Orion*

By Helena Holdsworth **Pictures** Instagram

Take steps to boost your health, clear your mind and lift your soul…

Walk to wellness


Take a moment to slow your mind

One of the easiest yet most powerful ways to stay healthy, especially as we age, is walking. It builds strength, clears the mind, and deepens our connection with the world around us.

In his book, *Walking for Mind, Body and Soul* (Vie, £12.99), Rowan Bailey explores how this everyday movement can be a game changer for overall wellbeing. Here are his top tips to help you make every step count.

Low impact, high reward

Unlike high-impact exercise, walking is gentle on the joints while offering significant benefits. 'Forget running, lifting weights, or complicated exercise classes,' Rowan writes. 'Walking has been hailed as the best form of exercise around, and it's not difficult to see why.'

Walking improves heart health, increases circulation and strengthens muscles. 'It's a weight-bearing exercise, which means every step helps strengthen bones and slow the loss of density,' Rowan explains. This makes it an effective way to lower the risk of osteoporosis. 'To get the best results, aim to walk at a brisk pace for a mile (or 1.5km) a day.'

Even small adjustments help. 'Taking the stairs, walking short distances instead of driving, and scheduling short strolls throughout the day can make a real difference,' he advises.

> 'Every step helps strengthen bones and slow the loss of density'

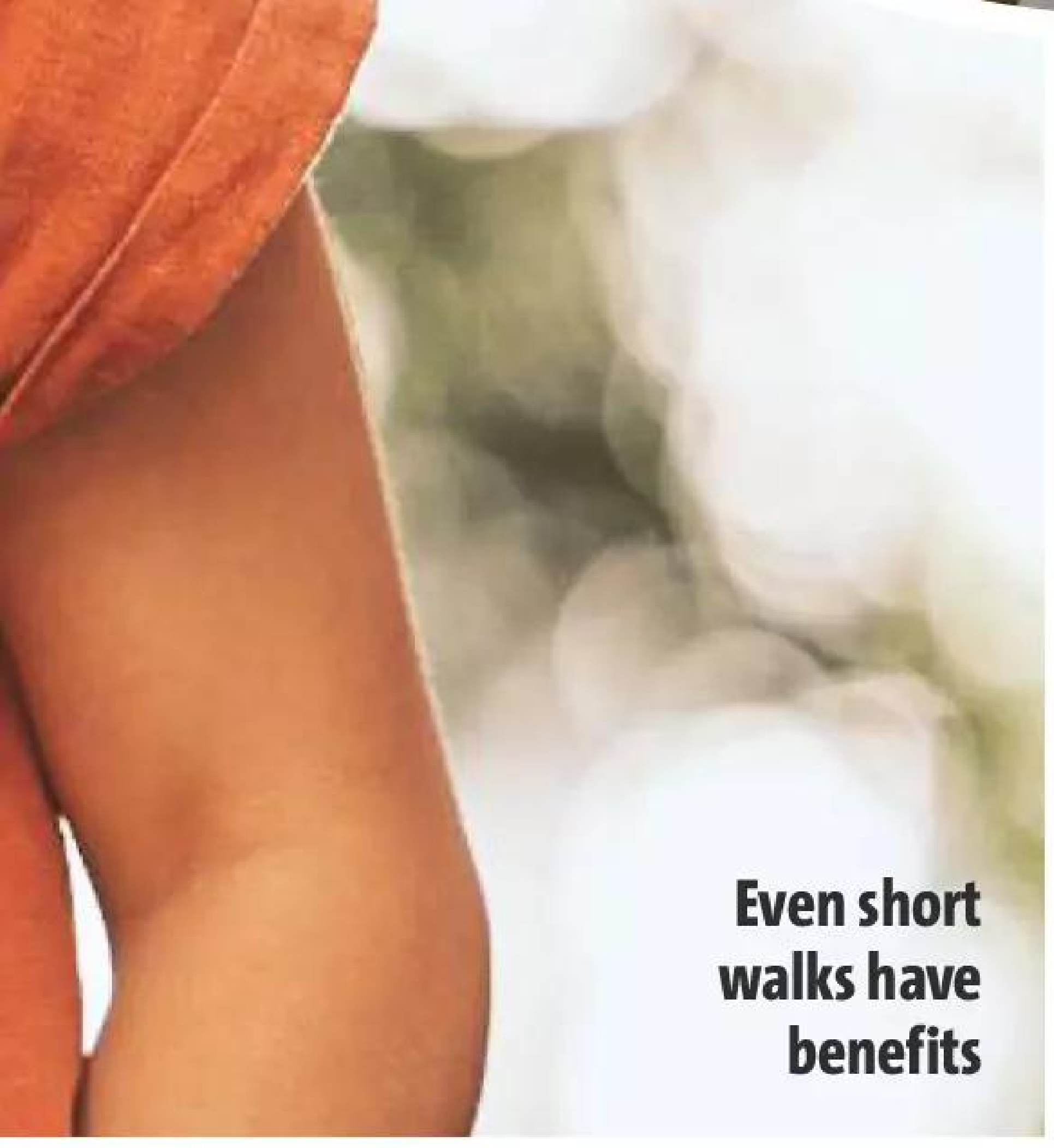
Stroll for the soul

Beyond physical health, walking reduces stress, lowers anxiety and boosts mood. 'Walking isn't just exercise for the body; it's nourishment for the soul,' Rowan writes.

Regular movement increases endorphins, while time spent in nature further enhances wellbeing.

'Stepping outside and immersing

Walk briskly to reduce your osteoporosis risk



Even short walks have benefits

ourselves in nature helps us feel calmer, more present and more at peace,' says Rowan. Being in green spaces is known to lower cortisol levels, the hormone linked to stress.

Walking also improves sleep. 'Our circadian rhythm – the body's internal clock – relies on natural light to regulate sleep patterns,' Rowan explains. 'A morning walk signals to the brain that it's time to be alert, while an evening stroll helps the body wind down and aids digestion.'

Meditate on the move

Walking with intention transforms a simple stroll into a really calming experience. 'A mindful walk is meditation in motion. It's a way to feel grounded, calm and connected to our surroundings,' says Rowan. For those new to mindful walking, he advises focusing on each step, your breath and every sensation. 'You don't have to meditate – just be present. Walking this way turns a simple activity into a restorative practice.'

He encourages walkers to fully engage their senses, turning each step into a richer experience. 'The more we notice – the colours of the leaves, the scent of damp earth, the rhythm of our breath – the more present we become.'

Smell can be a powerful trigger for memory and mood. 'The scent of pine needles in winter or wildflowers on the breeze can lift the spirits and bring back memories,' he says. Touch also plays a role in grounding us in the moment. 'Running your fingers along tree bark or feeling the earth beneath your feet is incredibly grounding.'

Sound, too, can transform a walk into a meditation. 'Birdsong, rustling leaves and flowing water all create a symphony that slows the mind,' he says. Even taste can deepen the experience. 'Foraging, whether blackberries in late summer or wild mint, connects us to the land.'

Rowan even advocates tree hugging. 'Hugging a tree might feel odd at first, but it's a deeply soothing act,' he explains. Research suggests trees release phytoncides, compounds that reduce stress, lower blood pressure and boost immunity. 'If you let yourself embrace the moment, quite literally, you'll feel a shift in your body – a sense of being held and supported.'

By tuning in to these small but powerful details, every walk becomes an opportunity to slow down, reset and reconnect with the world around us.

Pace with friends

Walking alone can be reflective, but walking with others provides additional benefits. 'Holding hands, linking arms, or simply walking side by side releases oxytocin – the "love" hormone – which promotes trust and connection,' Rowan writes.

Groups can provide motivation and accountability. 'Whether it's a formal group or just a regular catch-up walk, sharing the experience makes it more enjoyable,' Rowan says. Walking also encourages conversation. 'We often find it easier to share our thoughts when we're walking beside someone rather than facing them across a table.'

> 'Walking reduces stress, lowers anxiety and boosts mood'

Hike for your head

Many great minds, including authors Charles Darwin, Virginia Woolf and Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, relied on walking to spark creativity. Research confirms that walking increases creative thinking by up to 60%. 'When we walk, our brain gets a chance to wander, explore new ideas and make unexpected connections,' Rowan explains.

He also suggests trying a self-kindness walk. 'As you walk, remind yourself of times you were kind, things you're proud of and moments that made you smile.'

Find your flow

Whether brisk or slow, solo or social, every step contributes to a healthier, happier life. 'Walking isn't about how fast or far you go,' Rowan reminds us. 'It's about taking time for yourself, enjoying the journey and appreciating the small joys along the way.' So, lace up your shoes, step outside and embrace the power of walking.

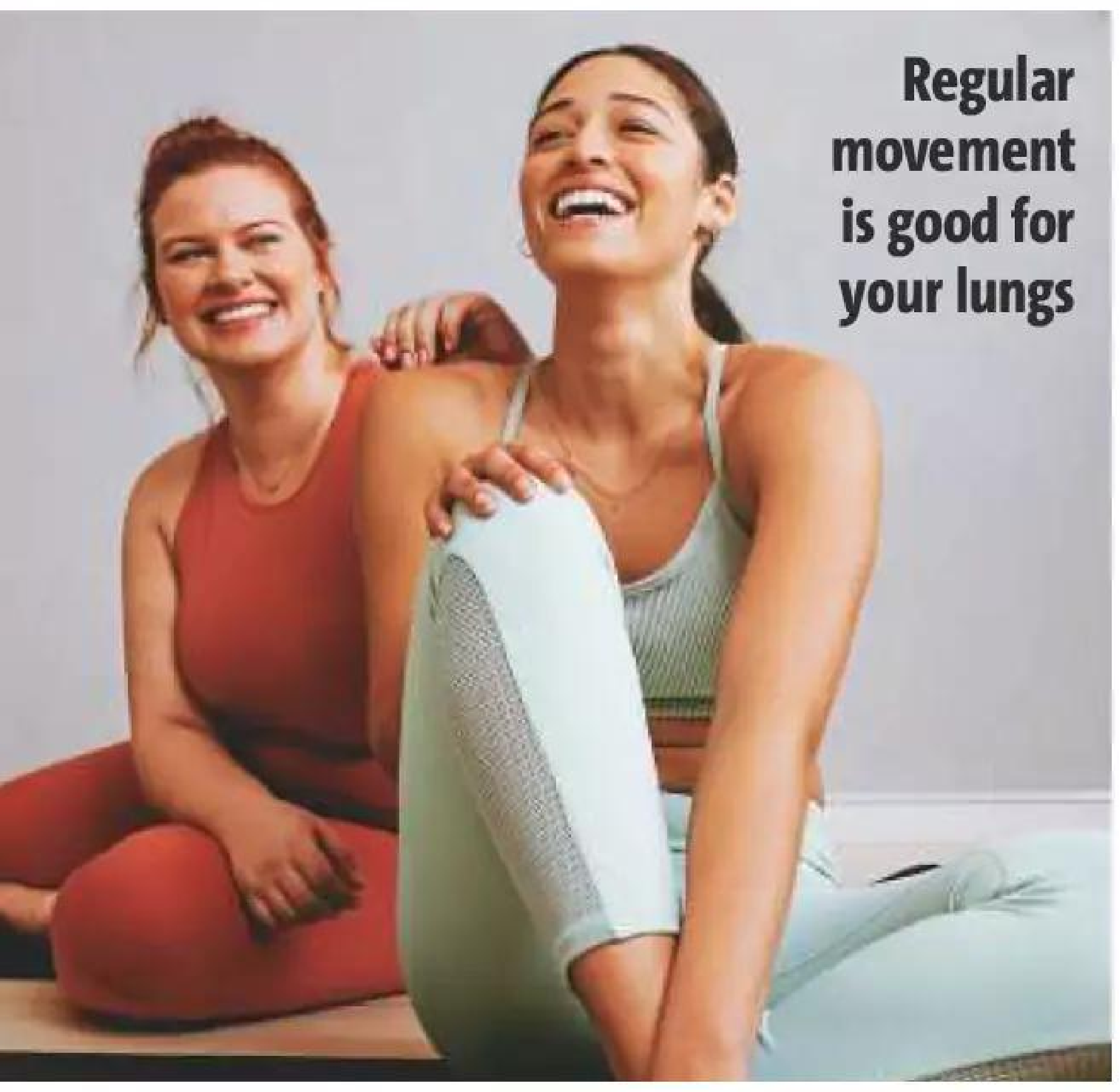
Walking is gentle on the joints

By Helena Holdsworth, **Pictures** Adobe Stock

Live long and thrive

Our experts reveal how to keep your body feeling younger for longer

While it might not be the first that comes to mind, skin isn't the only organ that shows signs of ageing. From your heart to your brain, the passing of time has a significant effect – negatively impacting our health.



Regular movement is good for your lungs

While there's no way to slow chronological ageing (how long you've been alive), scientists believe there are ways to hold back elements of biological ageing (which is measured in damage to cells and tissue) – such as how well your body functions and your likelihood of certain diseases. While genetics, of course, play a role, there are pro-active steps you can take to potentially maintain healthy organs for longer. Here, our experts reveal all.

Protect your heart

Research suggests that regular cardiovascular exercise is one of the best ways to help slow the damage that happens to the heart over time as a result of both age and lifestyle. Ruth Goss, British Heart Foundation senior cardiac nurse, says, 'All hearts naturally age over time, but exercise, alongside diet and lifestyle choices, is key in reducing the effects of ageing on the heart.

'Exercise can reduce your risk of heart and circulatory diseases by up to 35%.

'Where possible, try to do 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week – this is exercise when you feel warm and when your heart rate might be increased.

'Embracing the Mediterranean diet has also been shown to help reduce the risk of high blood pressure and raised cholesterol, which can lead to heart attack or stroke. Additionally, if you're a smoker, just one year after quitting smoking your risk of a heart attack is half that of a current smoker.'

> 'Taking just two weeks off alcohol can allow the liver to heal itself'

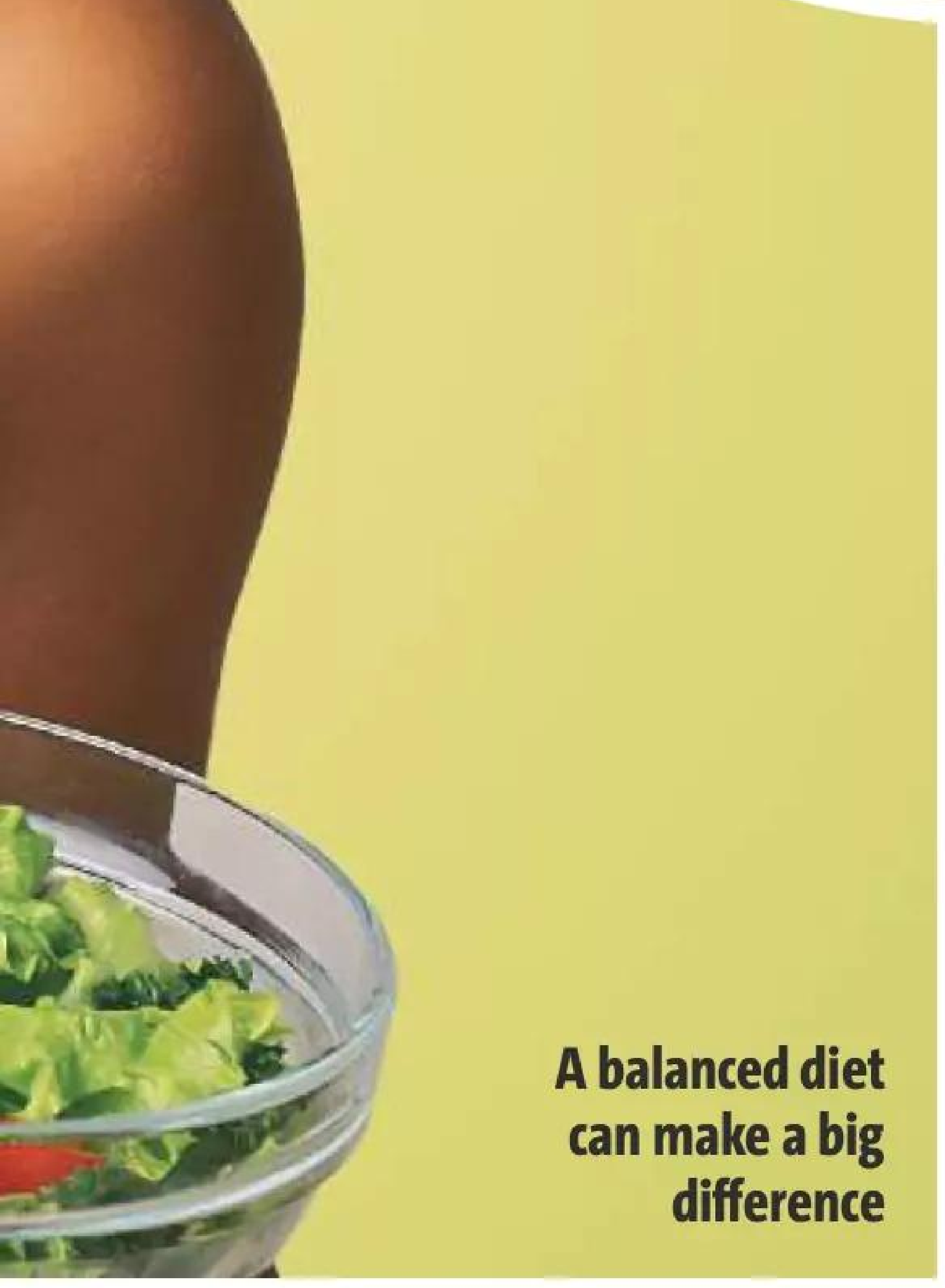
Unsure how your heart is ageing? Use the NHS's tool on its website and calculate your 'heart age'.

Strengthen your lungs

As we age, our lungs become weaker and our lung function can gradually decline. However, there are things we can do to help strengthen them.

Emma Rubach, head of health advice at Asthma + Lung UK, says, 'As we age, it's important

Stay hydrated to help your gut



A balanced diet can make a big difference

to stay as active as possible, especially when it comes to our lung health. Regular movement is good for your lungs because it increases the strength of your muscles, including your breathing muscles.

'Eating a well-balanced diet can also help prevent chest infections and keep your lungs healthy.

'However, if you smoke, stopping smoking is the best thing you can do to protect your lungs, regardless of your age, because smokers are at a much higher risk of developing a serious lung condition.

'Where possible, avoid areas of heavy pollution too, as being exposed to air pollution over a long period of time can also cause lung conditions and increase the risk of infections.'

Love your liver

Professor Stephen Ryder, consultant hepatologist and medical advisor to the British Liver Trust, says, 'The liver is an incredible organ with the ability to regenerate itself, but certain lifestyle factors can accelerate its ageing.

'Reducing alcohol intake is an essential part of improving liver health. Excessive alcohol consumption places a heavy strain on the liver, leading to fat build-up, inflammation, and scarring. Research has shown that if the liver has early signs of damage, taking just two to three weeks off alcohol can allow the liver to heal itself, with its functions returning to full capacity.

'Losing weight and improving your diet can also have a positive impact on your liver. If you're overweight or obese, losing just 5-10% of your body weight can significantly reduce liver fat.'

Improve your kidneys

Fiona Loud, policy director at Kidney Care UK, says, 'Kidney function declines by about 1% per year as we get older, but there are lots of simple things we can all do to look after our kidneys as we age.

'Not smoking can make a huge difference. Smokers are four times more likely than non-smokers to develop kidney failure, but quitting helps you reduce these risks, and the benefits start as soon as you stop.

'Eating a balanced diet and reducing the amount of salt and sugar in your diet can help too. A high-salt diet can contribute to high blood pressure, which can be a factor in kidney disease, so aim to consume no more than 6g of salt a day.

'Drinking plenty of fluids helps your body's cells work better, as well as flushing out bacteria that can cause urinary tract infections or the crystals that can form into kidney stones.

'Sleep is important too, as research suggests that sleeping for five hours or less a night may directly impact on your kidney function.'

> 'Kidney function declines by about 1% per year as we get older'

Boost your brain

Dr Tim Beanland, head of knowledge at Alzheimer's Society and author of *The Brain Health Puzzle Book*, says, 'There are steps you can take to help slow down normal brain ageing and these will also help reduce your risk of dementia, which is a growing and devastating condition.

'Keeping your heart healthy so your brain is well supplied with blood is key. Getting regular physical exercise – aerobic and resistance – and eating a healthy balanced diet can make a big difference. Not smoking, drinking less alcohol and keeping on top of any health conditions, such as diabetes or high blood pressure, can also help you slow down brain ageing.

'Keeping mentally and socially active makes a big difference too. One way to "stretch" the grey matter in the brain is by regularly doing puzzles. The same applies to learning a new language or instrument. Like any muscle, your brain needs to be challenged or "worked out" to stay in tip-top shape.'

Nourish your gut

Emerging research suggests there are ways we can help slow down the biological ageing process in the gut to help reduce our risk of age-related degenerative diseases. For example, ensuring we have a variety of plants and enough fibre in our diet, taking regular exercise, getting enough sleep and stopping smoking have all been shown to help boost the health of our gut microbiome.

Georgia Sturt, research and grants manager at Bowel Research UK, says, 'Like the nerves in our brain, the nerves in our bowel can become less effective as we age. This can mean that poo moves more slowly through the gut and people get constipated more often.

'To combat this, it's vital to drink plenty of fluids and eat lots of fibre-rich foods, such as whole grains, beans, fruits and veg. These have the added benefit of feeding the good bacteria that live in our gut. These bacteria can also reduce the gut inflammation that contributes to other age-related diseases, like bowel cancer.'

- *For more info, please visit, bhf.org.uk, britishlivertrust.org.uk/risk, alzheimers.org.uk, bowelresearchuk.org, asthmandlung.org.uk and kidneycareuk.org*

By Stephanie May. **Pictures** Adobe Stock

Learning can help your brain stay young

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Whether you like the challenge of sudokus, the fun of wordsearches, solving crossword clues or breaking codes, our range of puzzle magazines has something for all ages and abilities. It's the perfect way to relax, keep your brain sharp, and add some mindfulness to your day all in one go!

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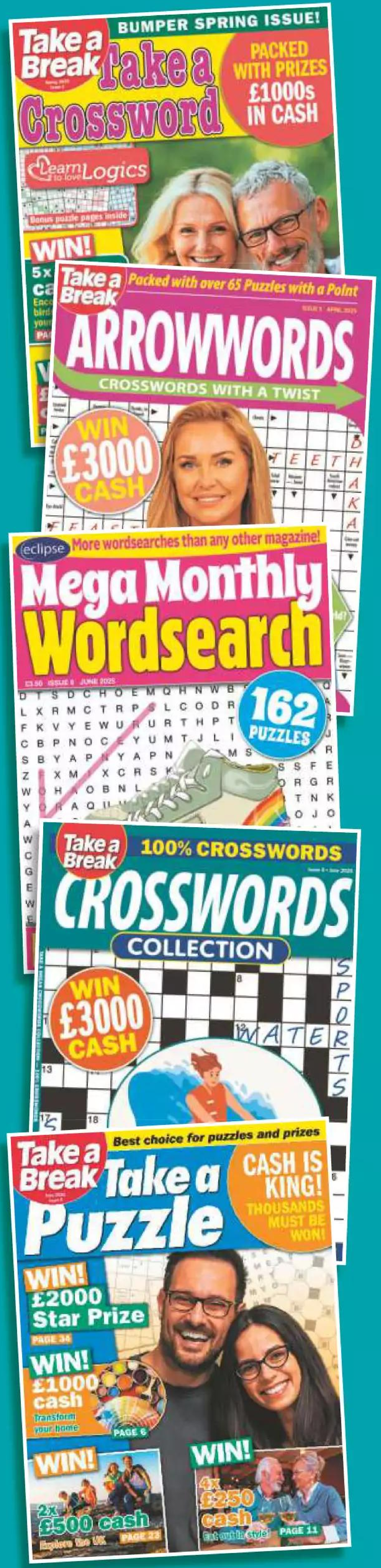
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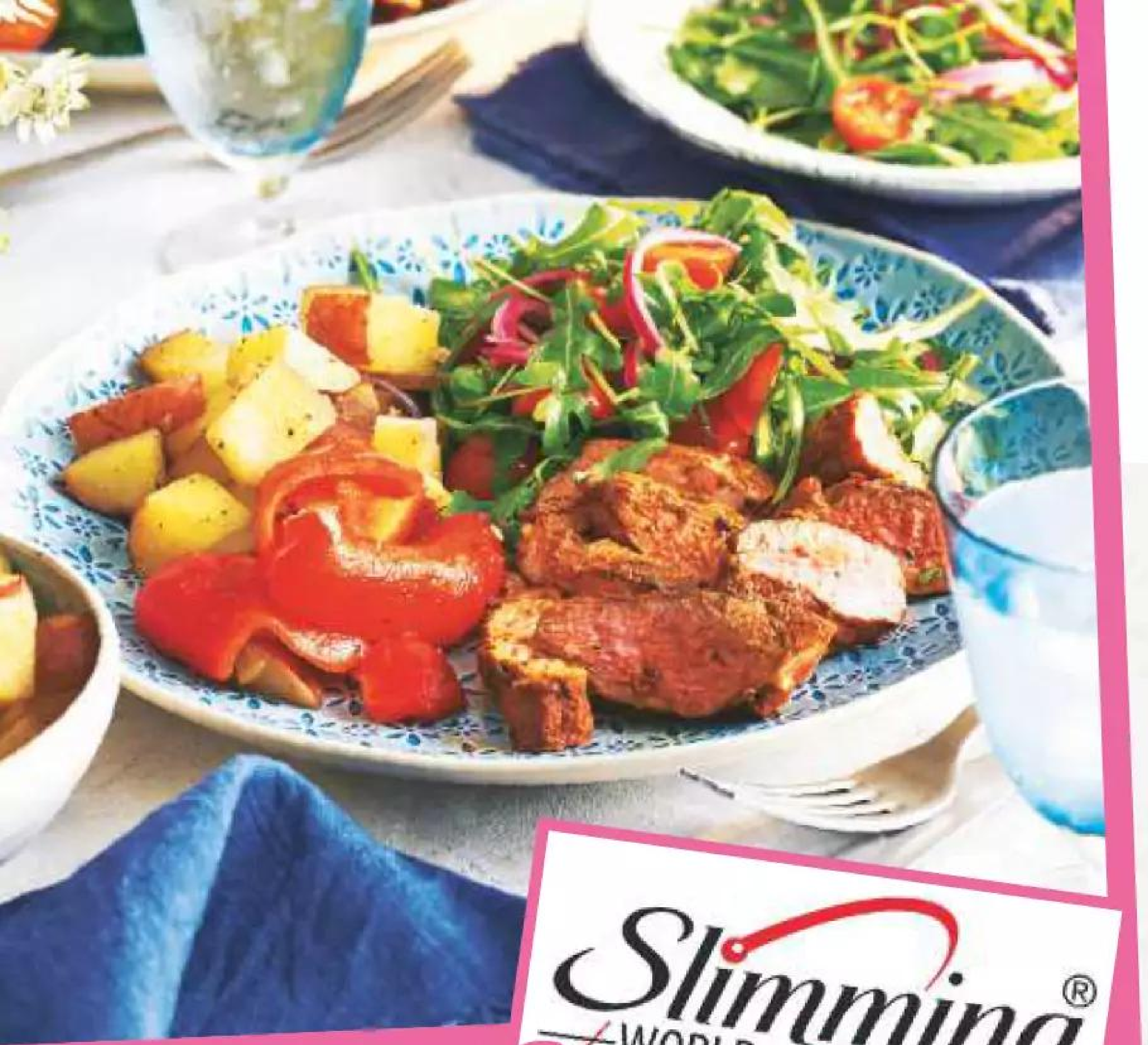

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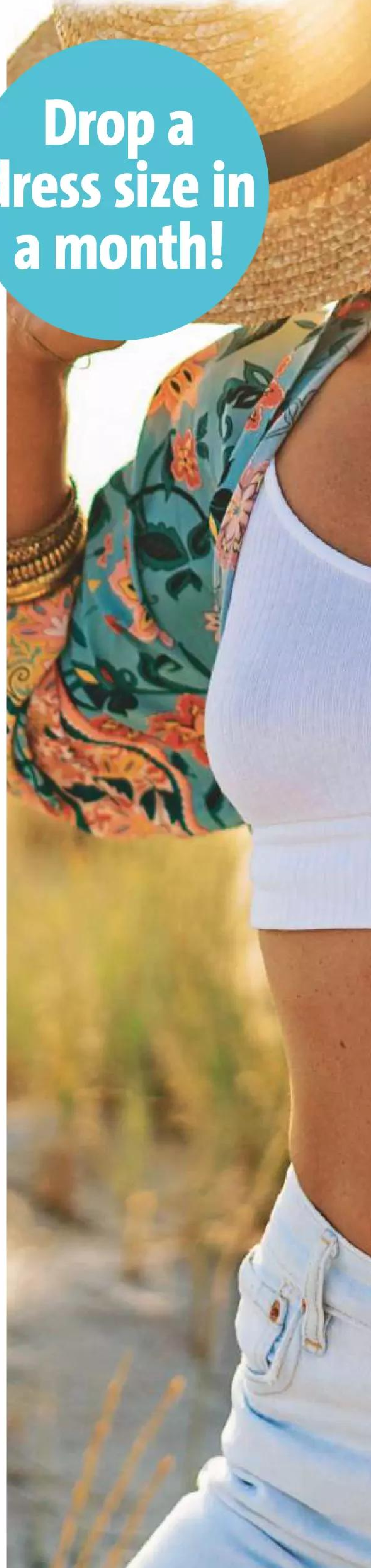
DROP A STONE IN A MONTH! Plan inside

Lose weight, tone up and enjoy yourself

Inspirational celebs and real women

The FEAST Plan

Nutritionist Juliette Kellow shows you how to FEAST your way to a slimmer waistline, more energy and better health…



Drop a dress size in a month!

There's nothing like a bit of sunshine to motivate us into thinking about how we can change our diet to lose weight, shape up and improve our health as summer approaches. But in the past, that's typically meant cutting out favourite foods, surviving on tiny portions, and constantly being ravenous – it's time for a fresh approach.

Enter our FEAST plan! Forget feeling hungry, tired and miserable. Based on healthy eating guidelines, this new way of eating provides delicious meals that are budget-friendly and designed to leave you feeling full and bursting with energy. Better still, the plan works in harmony with Mother Nature, swapping processed foods for fresh, natural ingredients that are bursting with flavour.

You'll find our meals and snacks are full of nutrient-rich foods, such as wholegrains, fish, chicken, pulses, dairy and nuts. There's an abundance of delicious fruits and vegetables, including seasonal choices such as berries, cherries, peaches, asparagus, rocket, spring onions and radishes. Just a few tasty ways to boost five-a-day as we move towards summer. Our meals also use nature's own flavour enhancers – herbs, spices, garlic, citrus and onions rather than salt or artificial ingredients. And while, lean red meat is still on the menu, albeit in small amounts, the FEAST plan is easy to adapt if you prefer a vegetarian or vegan way of eating.

WHAT IS IT?

The FEAST plan is about balance, nutrition and enjoyment. Here's what FEAST stands for:

FILLING Studies show the quantity of food we eat is just as important for satisfying hunger as what we eat, so the FEAST plan focuses on filling, nutritious foods. Meals are also packed with hunger-busting protein and fibre, to keep you fuller for longer.

ENERGISING The FEAST plan encourages eating regularly to avoid blood sugar drops and embraces fibre-filled carbs. That means less tiredness and lasting energy throughout the day.

AFFORDABLE Move over expensive or unusual ingredients. The FEAST plan is full of everyday foods you can buy from your local supermarket.

SUSTAINABLE This is a plan that's better for you and the planet. It's packed with plants and seasonal ingredients – key elements for a more sustainable diet. But the easy, delicious meals mean it's also a plan most people can stick with for good, making it sustainable for you in the long term.

TASTY We haven't forgotten flavour! Our FEAST plan meals are bursting with taste, turning healthy eating into delicious dishes you're guaranteed to love.

HOW THE FEAST PLAN WORKS

Our FEAST plan is designed to help you lose weight safely and steadily – up to 1kg (2lb) a week. Combine it with at least 30 minutes of moderately intense exercise, such as brisk walking, at least five times a week for best results and to help sustain your weight loss. Not looking to lose weight? Then just increase your portions slightly and enjoy!

Here's what to do...

- Choose one breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack each day – vary your choices to ensure you get a range of nutrients.
- Have 300ml skimmed milk or unsweetened, fortified plant-based milk each day in addition to what's included with meals in the plan. Add this to hot drinks or use it to make smoothies with fruit from the plan.
- Swap any of the dairy products in the plan for plant-based alternatives to provide more vegan options if you prefer.
- Fill your plate with veg – aim for different colours to get a good mix of vitamins and minerals. Toss salads with vinegar and citrus juices and add fresh herbs for flavour.
- Remember to drink – how much fluid you need will depend on your size, age and how much you sweat. Guidelines to drink 6-8 glasses of fluid a day are a rough estimate. Water is the best choice, but it's also fine to have tea, coffee and sugar-free soft drinks.

Breakfasts

Summer fruit salad with yogurt
1 peach, 1 slice canteloupe melon and 10 strawberries chopped and topped with 5tbsp fat-free Greek yogurt and 1tbsp toasted oats.

Poached egg and tomatoes on toast
1 slice wholegrain toast topped with 1tsp low-fat spread, 2 poached eggs and 1 grilled tomato.

Banana, blueberry and coconut smoothie bowl
1 frozen banana blended with 5tbsp coconut-flavoured soya yogurt and 1 handful blueberries, poured into a bowl and topped with a few more blueberries, 1tsp desiccated coconut and 2tsp mixed nuts.

Feta, mushroom and spinach omelette
Fry 1 handful sliced mushrooms in 1tsp veg oil until brown, then add 2 beaten eggs, 1 handful spinach and 25g crumbled reduced-fat feta cheese. Cook until set. Plus 15 cherries.

Mixed berry branflakes
6tbsp branflakes with 1 handful each of raspberries, blueberries and strawberries, and skimmed milk.

Peanut butter and banana on toast
1 slice wholegrain toast topped with 1tbsp unsweetened peanut butter and 1 small banana.

Avo, tomato and rocket crispbreads
4 rye crispbreads topped with ½ small avocado mashed with lemon juice, 1 sliced tomato and rocket.

Lunches

Tuna and cheese melt
10cm piece granary baguette halved and lightly toasted. Top with ½ can tuna in water (drained) mixed with ½ chopped small red onion and 2tsp light mayo, and 2tbsp grated reduced-fat cheese. Grill until the cheese melts and serve with salad.

Chicken and avocado sandwich
2 slices wholegrain bread filled with ½ small, mashed avocado and 2 slices skinless chicken. Serve with salad. Plus 15 cherries.

Continued over the page...

Edited by Carly Honeyfield. Photos: Shutterstock

Moroccan chickpea and rice salad

½ can chickpeas (drained) tossed with 4tbsp cooked brown rice, ½ grated carrot, ½ sliced small red onion, ½ chopped red pepper, fresh mint and parsley, 2tbsp pomegranate seeds, 2tsp olive oil and lemon juice and zest.

Jacket potato with salmon and cream cheese

1 medium-sized jacket potato topped with ½ can pink salmon mixed with 1tbsp light soft cheese, 1tbsp fat-free Greek yogurt, lemon juice, chopped cucumber and black pepper. Served with salad. Plus 1 slice cantaloupe melon.

Houmous and pepper wrap

1 wholemeal wrap filled with 4tbsp reduced-fat houmous, 1 chopped roasted red pepper (from a jar) and 1 handful rocket. Plus 1 nectarine and 1 apple.

Spanish omelette

Chop and fry ½ small red onion, ½ courgette and ½ green pepper in 1tsp veg oil until soft. Add 4 sliced, cooked new potatoes. Pour over 2 eggs beaten with 1tbsp skimmed milk. Cook until set and serve with salad. Plus 1 orange.

Greek pasta salad

5tbsp cooked wholewheat pasta mixed with ½ small red onion, 5 cherry tomatoes, ½ green pepper, ¼ cucumber, 6 olives and 50g reduced-fat feta cheese (all chopped), drizzled with 3tbsp tzatziki.

Dinner

Garlicky prawn and tomato penne

Fry ½ chopped onion and garlic to taste in 1tbsp olive oil until soft. Add 10 cherry tomatoes and 100g large raw prawns. Cook until they turn pink. Mix in 200g cooked wholewheat pasta, and lemon juice and zest, fresh chopped parsley and black pepper to taste. Serve with salad. Plus 2 handfuls raspberries.

Stuffed peppers

Halve 1 red pepper lengthways and fill with a mix of 3tbsp prepared couscous, 2 chopped spring onions, 2tbsp peas, 2tbsp sweetcorn, ½ ball reduced-fat mozzarella cheese and lemon juice, garlic and fresh thyme to taste. Bake for 30 min and serve with salad. Plus 1 handful strawberries.

Mediterranean tofu and veggie wraps

Marinate 100g tofu cubes in 1tbsp olive oil, lemon zest and juice, crushed garlic and oregano for 10 min. Place in a roasting tin with ½ red and green pepper, 1 small red onion, 1 courgette and ½ small aubergine (all chopped). Roast until cooked through. Serve in 1 wholemeal wrap with shredded lettuce. Plus 1 slice cantaloupe melon.

Parma-wrapped cheese and pesto chicken

Cut 1 skinless chicken breast in half horizontally and fill the middle with 1tbsp red pesto and 1tbsp grated reduced-fat cheese. Wrap in 2 slices pancetta ham and bake until cooked through. Serve with 4 boiled new potatoes in their skins tossed with 1tsp low-fat spread and steamed broccoli and carrots. Plus 10 cherries.

Salmon with new potato salad

Make a potato salad by chopping 4 new potatoes boiled in their skins and mixing them with 2tbsp tzatziki, 3 sliced spring onions, 3 sliced radishes and snipped chives. Serve with 1 grilled or barbecued chunky salmon fillet, 5 steamed asparagus spears and 3tbsp peas.

Grilled halloumi and vegetable burger

Brush ½ red pepper, 1 flat mushroom, 2 slices aubergine and 2 thick slices halloumi cheese with oil. Grill or barbecue until browned. Serve in 1 wholegrain roll with salad on the side. Plus fruit salad made from 1 peach and 1 handful each of raspberries and blueberries.

Vegetable and cashew nut stir-fry

Fry chilli, garlic and fresh ginger to taste in 2tsp veg oil for 1 min. Add ½ pack stir-fry veg and stir-fry until cooked but still crunchy. Add 1tbsp cashew nuts, 1tsp reduced-salt soy sauce and 8tbsp cooked brown rice. Heat through and serve. Plus 1 slice cantaloupe melon.

Snacks

Houmous and carrot sticks

4tbsp reduced-fat houmous with 1 carrot cut into sticks.

Raspberry yogurt

2 handfuls raspberries mixed with 4tbsp fat-free Greek yogurt and 1tsp honey.

Almonds

25g unsalted almonds.

Tzatziki and cucumber crispbreads V

3 rye crispbreads topped with 6tsp tzatziki and sliced cucumber.

Creamy strawberry lolly

Ice lolly made by puréeing 1 handful strawberries with 6tbsp fat-free Greek yogurt then freezing in a lolly mould.

Prawn mayo salad bowl

Bowl of salad with 100g pack cooked prawns mixed with 1tbsp light mayo.

Summer fruit salad

1 peach, 10 cherries, 1 handful strawberries and ½ a mango.

NB. If you are pregnant, breastfeeding, under 18 or have a medical condition please seek professional advice before changing your diet.

Summer SNACKS

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NATURALLY DELICIOUS
VEG BITES
ITALIAN INSPIRED RED PEPPER, SPINACH & HERBS
NATURAL SOURCE OF PROTEIN
13 PLANT POINTS
50g℮

Gosh Veg Bites Snack Packs, 107 calories, Morrisons, **£1.30**

VIVERA
20G PROTEIN PER PACK
THAI PROTEIN BITES

Vivera Protein Bites, 188 calories, Ocado, **£2.65**

HOLY MOLY
GUACAMOLE
CHIP&DIP

Holy Moly Guacamole Chip & Dip Snack Pot, 178 calories, Sainsbury's, **£1.75**

SAMBAZON
FROZEN SCOOPABLE AÇAI
ORIGINAL
500mL (380g)

Sambazon Scoopable Acai, 111 calories, Sainsbury's, **£4.70**

GLUTEN FREE
Caramelised biscuit
moments
Moreishly crunchy moments
nairn's
170g℮

Nairns Gluten Free Caramelised Biscuit Moments, 33 calories, ASDA, **£2.20**

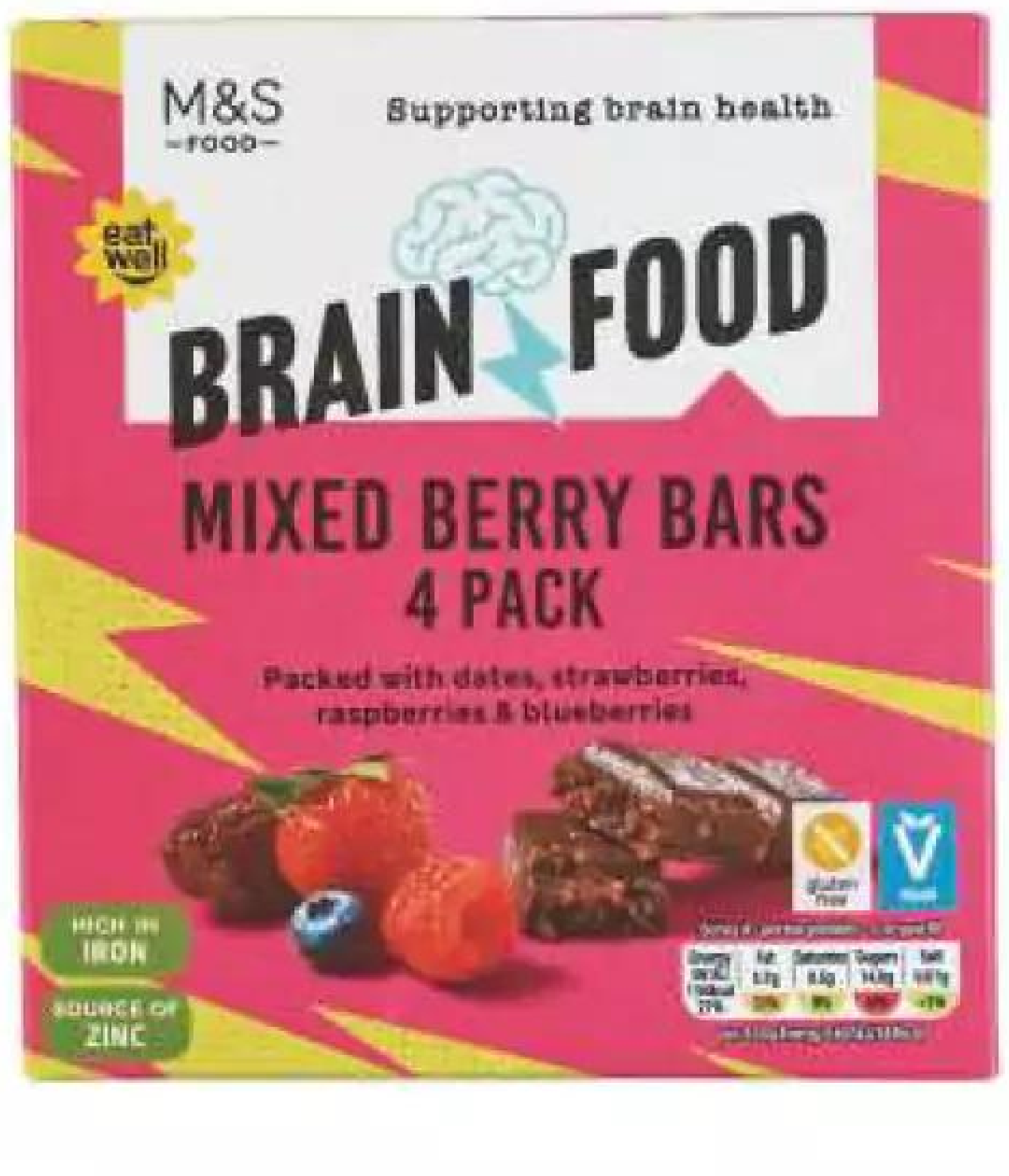
NEW
PUKPIP
REAL BANANA BITES
DIPPED IN DARK CHOCOLATE
VEGAN

Pukpip Banana Bites Dark Chocolate, 104 calories, Ocado, **£4.50**

nush
PROTEIN
HIGH PROTEIN ALMOND YOG STRAWBERRY
17g PLANT PROTEIN PER TUB

Nush Protein Almond Yog Strawberry, 98 calories, Ocado, **£3**

M&S Brain Food Mixed Berry Bars, 134 calories, M&S, **£3.20**


M&S FOOD
Supporting brain health
BRAIN FOOD
MIXED BERRY BARS 4 PACK
Packed with dates, strawberries, raspberries & blueberries

MADE WITH FRUIT JUICE
NEW
Rowntree's
Mango
x4

Rowntree's Mango Ice Lolly, 56 calories, Tesco, **£2.50**

NO PLASTIC TRAY
Clearspring
ORGANIC
SEAVEG
CRISPIES
Chilli
TOASTED NORI SNACK

Organic Seaveg Crispies Chilli, 23 calories, clearspring.co.uk, **£1.29**

NEW
RYVITA
THINS
Snack it
SOUR CREAM & CHIVE FLAVOUR

Ryvita Snack It Thins Sour Cream and Chive, 38 calories, Tesco, **£2.20**

By Lucy Brown

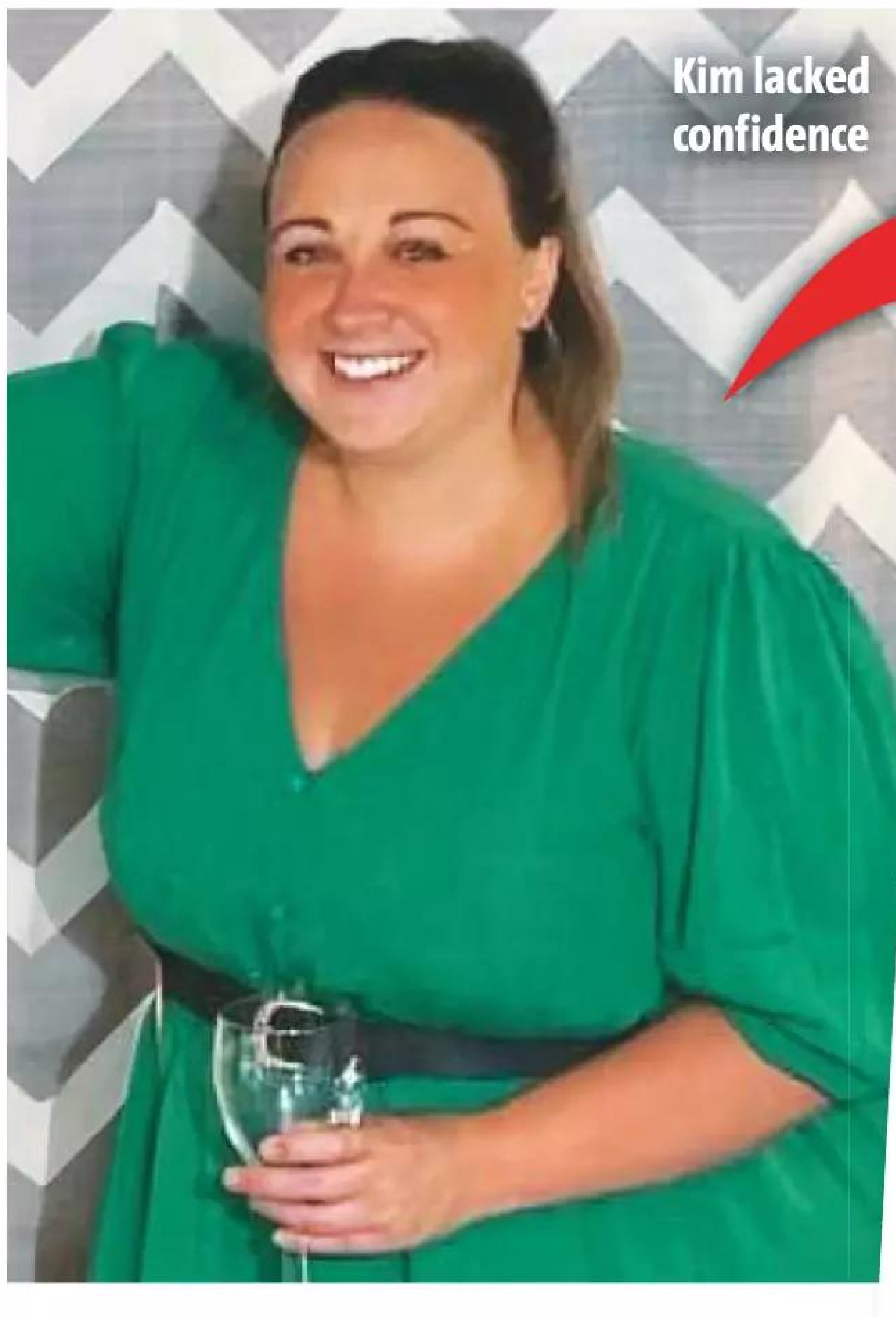
Slimming World®

‘10st lighter and living my best life!’

At nearly 21st, Kim Quigley, 33, felt her weight was stopping her from having fun with her two young sons

As I looked at the clock and saw it was almost the end of my shift, I felt relieved. I worked as a nurse at Nottingham’s Queen’s Medical Centre. As a size 22, being on my feet all the time, I’d be exhausted after a shift and I was constantly out of breath. My weight affected my family life too. On one holiday with my partner Anthony and our boys, Jax, now seven, and Grayson, five, they were desperate for me to go on the waterslide. ‘Not today,’ I said. There was no way I could do it, too scared I’d get stuck, but their little disappointed faces broke my heart.

I knew I needed to lose weight but I was so busy juggling a full-time as well as childcare that I didn’t know where to start. I ate all the wrong things – quick and easy convenience foods. I’d have a sugary cereal breakfast bar for breakfast followed by six custard creams mid-morning. Lunch would be a shop-bought meal deal triple sandwich with mayo, a bag of crisps and a chocolate bar and for dinner we’d have lasagne with garlic bread and oven chips, and every Friday and Saturday a large selection of Chinese takeaway. I’d also drink two litres of diet cola daily and have my tea with two sugars.



Kim lacked confidence

She feels so much better at work

BEFORE
20st 9lb
Size 22

Then when I was out with my friends one night in June 2021, I fell and broke my leg. Being unable to move as I recovered,

AFTER
10st 13lb
Size 12

I gained more weight than ever. In 2023, my mum, Sharon, suggested we join Slimming World together. I was nervous going to the class near to where we lived in Kirk Hallam, Derbyshire, but I was glad I had Mum as support. At 5ft 3in I weighed 20st 9lb, which stunned me, but Sam, the Slimming World Consultant, was so kind and welcoming, she made me have faith.

As soon as I left the group that night, my relationship with food completely changed. I started making healthier versions of all my favourite meals – I stopped cooking in oil and I bought lean meat. It was easy to adapt our family meals so we could all eat the same thing. The boys especially loved Slimming World's Chilli Con Carne!

As the weight steadily dropped off, I was losing 2-3lb a week, and my confidence grew. Before, a weekly highlight for me was our regular Friday and Saturday night takeaways with all the family, with plenty of beer or wine. I'd never think about the calories we were consuming. But on Slimming World I didn't have to miss out entirely. We still had our family takeaway nights, but we enjoyed healthier versions – 'fakeaways' – our favourite being a Slimming World recipe chicken kebab with Slimming World chips. And it wasn't just me benefitting – Anthony lost 2st just from eating the same meals as me!

In just a year, I hit my target of 12st. Mum lost 2st and when my sister Charlotte saw the plan working for us, she joined the group too and now she's lost 4st, so we're 16st lighter in total! We love swapping recipes and cooking together. The weekly group support has been a game-changer for me. Being around other people who get it makes all the difference.

The strategies I've learned and all the encouragement has kept me motivated when I might have struggled if I was finding my own way. I still enjoy going out with my friends at the weekends, and I've learned how to make healthier choices around my food and drink to still have a great time. I'll make sure I've got something ready and waiting for when I get in, so I'm not tempted to reach for the late-night snacks!

I've since adjusted my goal weight and lost a further stone. I now weigh 10st 13lb – meaning I've lost 9st 10lb in total – and wear a size 12. Life now is so much easier. I don't get breathless like I used to and I'm not exhausted after a shift. We recently went to Menorca for a holiday and I made sure I went on every waterslide with the boys – Jax was so chuffed and I had so much fun too.

For me, Slimming World has been the perfect match – it fits into my life, allows me to enjoy food and eat the same meals as my family, and has helped me to lose weight and improve my health. I'm now a regular at the gym too. I didn't even walk anywhere before! I recently swam 25km for Cancer Research, raising just under £400, which was an amazing feeling. I really am now living my best life.

DIET BEFORE

BREAKFAST Sugary cereal breakfast bar
LUNCH Shop-bought meal deal triple sandwich with mayo, bag of crisps and a chocolate bar
DINNER Lasagne with garlic bread, oven chips and every Friday and Saturday a large selection of Chinese takeaway
SNACKS Chocolate bar, six custard creams, two litres of diet cola daily, tea with two sugars

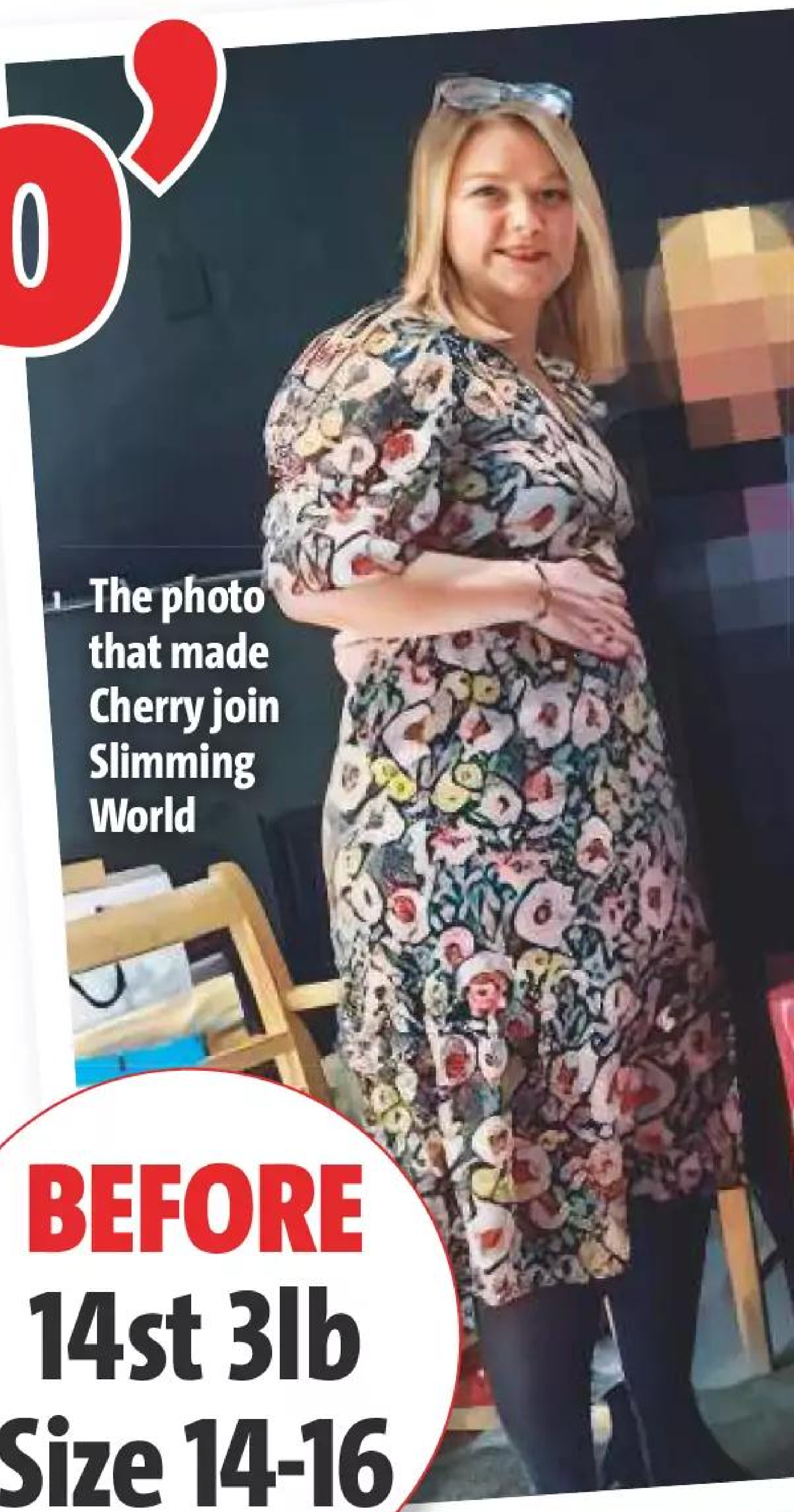
DIET AFTER

BREAKFAST Fresh fruit salad topped with fat-free yogurt
LUNCH Jacket potato with tuna and salad or a homemade sandwich on wholemeal bread, with a small bag of crisps
DINNER Chilli con carne with rice or chicken kebabs with Slimming World chips and salad
SNACKS Two high-fibre cereal bars, chocolate bar, fruit

● *For more information or to find your nearest group, visit slimmingworld.co.uk*

By Amy Rowland

‘I helped my local co
– then it was time to
after myself too’



The photo that made Cherry join Slimming World

BEFORE
14st 3lb
Size 14-16

After receiving an MBE, Cherry Mckean, 48, didn’t stop celebrating, but she had no idea the toll it had taken. Now she’s lost over 3 stone and feels great

Looking at the picture on the screen, I felt my eyes fill with tears. It was April 2024, and a photo of me and my aunt had been snapped at an event for Breast Cancer Now. I’d gradually gained weight over the past couple of years, but I’d had no idea until being confronted with it now. ‘How has this happened?’ I thought, upset.

My weight had been up and down in the past, and as a mum of three with a busy lifestyle, things had slipped by without me realising. I’d always played an active role in the community, living in the close-knit village of Earls Colne, Essex. But it was during the pandemic that things really ramped up.

When the first lockdown was announced, I worried about those who lived alone, so I launched a Facebook group where local people could volunteer to help those in need. The community really rallied together, helping buy groceries and collect prescriptions for those frightened about going to the shops, and we were a call away for anyone who just wanted to chat. The feedback was amazing, but naturally, as we came out of lockdown, the group stopped.

However, life showed no signs of slowing down. For a few years, I’d been running another Facebook group that gave advice on ways to protect the environment. Particularly after lockdown, I realised the importance of moving the group from a virtual space to a physical location, where people could go and make changes, rather than just talking about it. So, in 2022, I left my job of 28 years as a carpenter to open Ecolnes Refillery with my friend Rachel. We offered sustainable, eco-friendly goods, as well as refill options to reduce packaging. It felt like something I just had to do. It didn’t matter if just one person made a small change – it made a difference.

That April, a letter came through the door, and I couldn’t believe my eyes when I opened it. It was an invitation to a garden party at Buckingham Palace, due to my contributions to the local community during lockdown. I was so overwhelmed, and even more so on the day in May, when my husband Nik and I got dressed up to attend the prestigious event. It felt so special to be there.

Soon after, my mum told me, ‘I’ve had a weird email, can I forward it to you?’ I agreed and

Cherry enjoyed her celebrations

Collecting her MBE with her family

nmunity
look

AFTER
10st 10lb
Size 8-10

On a cruise after her weight loss

was shocked once more – it was from the Palace, asking if I'd like to receive the honour of an MBE. My family were so proud, but sworn to secrecy until the names were announced. Being the year of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, there were lots of street parties in the village, so it was a summer full of fun and celebrations.

In February 2023, I travelled to Buckingham Palace again with Nik and the children – Lily, now 22, Cameron, 19, and Lucy, 12 – to receive my MBE. The rooms were spectacular, and everyone was so friendly. The kids loved every moment. I was even lucky enough to meet Prince William. He congratulated me on my work and MBE, then we spoke about the environment. It was a very memorable and special day.

Over the next year, the celebrations never stopped. I was drinking wine and eating more. Selling delicious sweets and chocolates in the shop, I'd often give in to temptation and find myself grabbing treats. After a busy day, I'd grab something on the go, which was usually unhealthy, or I'd cook a large meal using lots of oil for dinner.

The small things slowly added up and now, seeing the photo, I felt devastated. Something needed to change. I'd previously lost weight with Slimming World, so I decided to start the plan again. The local group I'd attended before had closed, so in May 2024, I joined a nearby group in Feering, Essex. The consultant, Jo, was lovely and put me at ease right away. I was wearing a size 14-16 and weighed 14st 3lb, which put my BMI in the obese range. I'd put on a few stone in the past year, but I knew with some small changes I could get things under control.

Back home, I swapped my snacks of crisps and chocolate for fruit and Slimming World Hi-Fi bars. I liked that I could eat as much as I wanted and was still allowed the odd treat, like a glass of wine and low-fat chips. For those busy evenings, I stocked up the freezer with meals from Iceland's Slimming World range – my favourite being lasagne – or would plan ahead and batch cook to prepare for it. My appetite decreased and my sugar cravings were banished.

In the first week, I was thrilled to lose 6lb, then after five weeks, I'd shed a stone. From then, people started noticing the difference, and it felt amazing to hear their compliments. It was the start of my newfound confidence. For Nik's 50th birthday in April, we went on our first holiday abroad together – even though we've been together for 30 years! We went on a Mediterranean cruise and woke up in Sicily on Nik's big day. I took out all my gorgeous size-10 dresses, and it felt incredible knowing they fit me again.

In one year, I lost 3st 7lb, taking me to 10st 10lb. I was thrilled, and my family were so proud. I still attend my weekly weigh-ins as I've made friends in the group, and I find it keeps me accountable. When I previously lost weight, I stopped the plan as soon as I got to target, but my mindset has changed – this is a lifestyle.

Now, I'm focusing on the shop, as I want to continue to help people make small changes. In October, I'm planning a ribbon remembrance wall to raise awareness and break the silence surrounding baby and pregnancy loss, with all money raised going to the charity Sands. I sadly lost my own son, Conner, shortly after his birth 20 years ago. It'll be the third year of the event, which has received lots of support. I'm grateful that for all the weight I've lost, I've gained heaps of confidence and energy, which I'll use to keep giving back to the community.

DIET BEFORE

BREAKFAST Two or three slices of toast with butter and jam
LUNCH Sandwich and crisps
DINNER Large oily pasta
SNACKS Crisps, chocolate

DIET AFTER

BREAKFAST Porridge and strawberries
LUNCH Salad and ham or boiled egg
DINNER Steak and low-fat chips with veg and salad
SNACKS Fruit, SW Hi-fi bar

By Amber Connolly

Mission Possible

Training for a fitness challenge? Here's how to prep like a pro…

There's no better way to keep your good exercise intentions on track than signing yourself up for a challenge. It could be anything from a charity 5k or a Tough Mudder, to something more intensive like an Ironman, marathons or Hyrox (a race that combines running and functional fitness workouts). But how do you push body and mind to go the distance? We called in the experts to find out: former *Made In Chelsea* star and now world record holder Joshua Patterson ran 76 UK marathons; radio DJ and campaigner Adele Roberts made history as the fastest woman to run the London Marathon with a stoma and is now tackling all six Major Marathons; and Olympic sports scientist Professor Greg Whyte has guided everyone from Davina McCall to Cheryl through jaw-dropping endurance feats. If anyone knows how to push past 'the wall', it's them.

> 'Remember why you're doing it'

Know your why

When your lungs are burning and you'd kill – literally – for a Calippo, you might start to question what you were thinking when you signed up to your challenge. So, it's important to keep in mind your reason for wanting to do it in the first place.

Adele says, 'If your "why" is big enough, the "how" will take care of itself. Mine is to raise awareness of bowel cancer and those living with a stoma. Plus, showing what's possible post-cancer spurs me on and gives me so much fire in my belly to cross the finish line.'

Greg underscores how a strong purpose fuels resilience, saying, 'People with an emotional connection to their goal are far more likely to persevere when things get tough. Whether it's raising money for charity, proving something to yourself, or setting an example for

Adele goes for gold

Joshua crosses the finish line

your kids – anchor yourself to that reason. When motivation dips, that purpose is what keeps you going.'

Squad goals

Use training as an opportunity to connect. Joshua explains, 'Training with others – especially those who challenge you – makes you stronger, faster, and better. Absorb knowledge, and find the right fitness club to match your energy. When you're all pushing through the pain together, you often end up laughing. That shared struggle creates a bond and makes even the hardest workouts feel rewarding.'

Adele adds, 'There's nothing more powerful than someone looking you in the eye and saying, "Come on, we've got this." It makes a world of difference.'

Mind over miles

When the going gets tough, your mind can carry you further than your legs. Adele swears by visualisation, saying, 'I love to daydream about the end goal and see it before it happens. When I'm struggling, I tell myself, "You didn't come this far just to come this far",' she tells us.

Joshua also has a personal tactic, revealing, 'I break things down. If I'm 10 miles from the finish and struggling, I don't think about the 10 miles. Instead, I think about making it to the next lamppost or the next water station. Small wins keep you moving.'

Rest to be best

Recovery is just as important as training. Joshua warns, 'Neglecting recovery and mobility leads to injury or burnout. A cold plunge an hour before bed lowers body temperature and reduces cortisol, promoting deeper rest. Magnesium supplements can further support relaxation and muscle recovery. Prioritise sleep and remember that intense training demands rest.'

Adele says, 'Running six marathons in eight months has taught me that rest isn't optional – it's essential. Floatation tanks are my ultimate treat. They're like a giant chill pill for the body and mind.'

Greg reminds athletes to listen to their bodies. 'Pushing through discomfort is one thing, but ignoring pain is another,' he says. 'Recovery isn't just about resting. It's about proactive maintenance like stretching, massage, and hydration.'

> 'Recovery is just as important as training'

Nail nutrition

Joshua highlights the importance of fuelling your body correctly. 'Everyone sweats differently, and even if you don't sweat much, you're still losing sodium that needs replenishing,' he says. 'Precision Hydration offer bespoke online sweat tests and personalised plans, recommending the right balance of carbs, gels, and water per hour. These small tweaks in nutrition can make a big difference.'

Expect the unexpected

Whether it's a parkrun on a hot day, or a mountainous marathon, your body needs to be prepared. 'Be mindful of the external conditions you'll face on race day,' advises Josh. 'If you're running in extreme heat but live somewhere cold, train in layers or use a treadmill in a heated room.'

Greg adds, 'It's not just about training for the physical effort, but preparing for the logistical challenges like early start times, unfamiliar routes, or nutrition issues. The more you rehearse, the fewer surprises on the day.'

● *To view the full list of global Ironman and Ironman 70.3 events, visit ironman.com. Fortune Favours The Brave by Joshua Patterson (Penguin Life, £18.99) is out now*

Zoe Rae (sister to former Love Islander Molly-Mae Hague) competed in Hyrox

Prof Greg helped train Davina McCall

Words: Helena Holdsworth **Photos:** Instagram, Shutterstock

Love Island winner and pers
Gabby Allen shares her ultimat

Gabby: 'I like looking STRO

By Louise Bennett **Pictures:** Marco Vittur Styling: Cigdem Tanrioglu

Since nabbing the *Love Island: All Stars* crown, Gabby, 33, has never looked happier or fitter. A qualified personal trainer, she created the ultimate pre-island workout to get her body in the best possible shape for villa life. And despite recently announcing her split from her *All Stars* beau Casey Gorman, the entrepreneur is more ready than ever to take on what the future may hold. Here, she shares her secrets to the perfect peachy bum and her tips on how you can stay on track this summer.

You're looking amazing right now – can people do the programme you followed before you went in the *Love Island* villa?

Yes, my Island Workout is literally what I did before I went in there. I already trained anyway, but I've been really consistent, and I knew I needed to turn it up a notch. I do four days a week strength training, plus a couple of classes a week. And I get in loads of steps, especially with my dog Oscar.

How does it feel when people make comments about your body?

I'm an athletic-looking girl and I was actually made up because I felt like I'd achieved what I wanted. Some people don't like it and I get comments saying I look too masculine or I've gone too far, but I'm like, 'Cool, Karen.' I like looking strong and feeling strong. How I feel in myself makes such a difference and I feel, as a trainer, that's how I want my clients to look at me. I see beyond the negative comments, and nine times out of 10, people appreciate women who train. Actually, half the gyms are filled with women these days, which I love.

Tell us about your journey with body confidence, because you started off as a dancer...

I think that's probably where my self-confidence stems from, as I was essentially compared to people ever since I was three years old doing dance competitions. But I think that going into fitness has changed my perspective on aesthetic things, as it's not just about how I look any more. I'm a different person when I haven't trained. But when I was a dancer, I would get complimented if I'd lost weight. You go to auditions and if you don't get through, and you're stood next to someone who looks pretty much the same, you think, 'She's probably got the part because she's skinnier than me.' It's affected the way I've looked at myself over the years. But now I feel like it's done me a favour, as I can really appreciate being strong.

You've spoken recently about your scoliosis diagnosis and how strengthening your body has been key to that...

I got the diagnosis when I was 11, and had an operation to straighten my back, and then there was the recovery and navigating that as a dancer. Obviously, everyone is different, but for me, when I don't train, I get more pain than when I do train. The stronger I am, the better life is in general for me. My right side is much more dominant, so I do have to balance that out.

What are your future plans for your app Shape Up With Gabby?

I started out just doing live workouts on Instagram and we still do classes, which are amazing for energy boosting and calorie burning. But if the goal is to build your physique or change your body composition, you have to be doing weights as well. With the app, you get your own programme that you can do at home or take to the gym, and the results are just so amazing. I run retreats, too, which are my passion project. I love teaching in person and bringing a special community together. Of course, I pick amazing villas and the food is unreal. We also have a boat day and beach club day, as well as working hard, so it's like a girls' holiday!

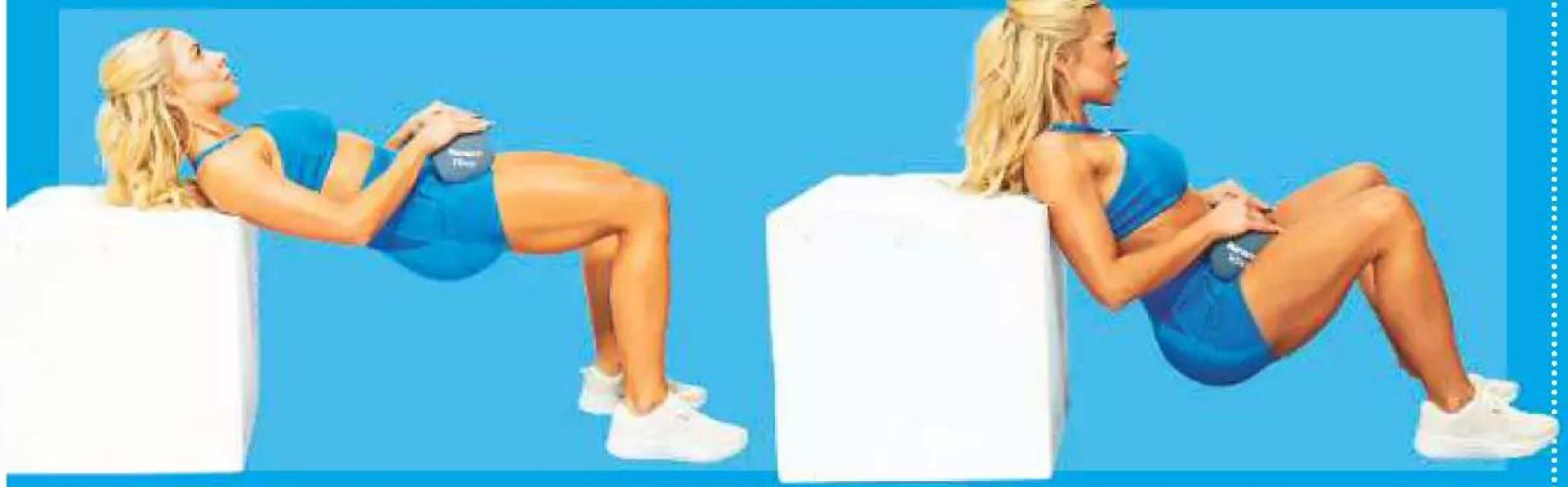
● *Gabby is a My Protein Ambassador (myprotein.com). To sign up to her Island Body Programme, go to shapeupwithgabby.co.uk*

onal trainer
e workout tips

NG'

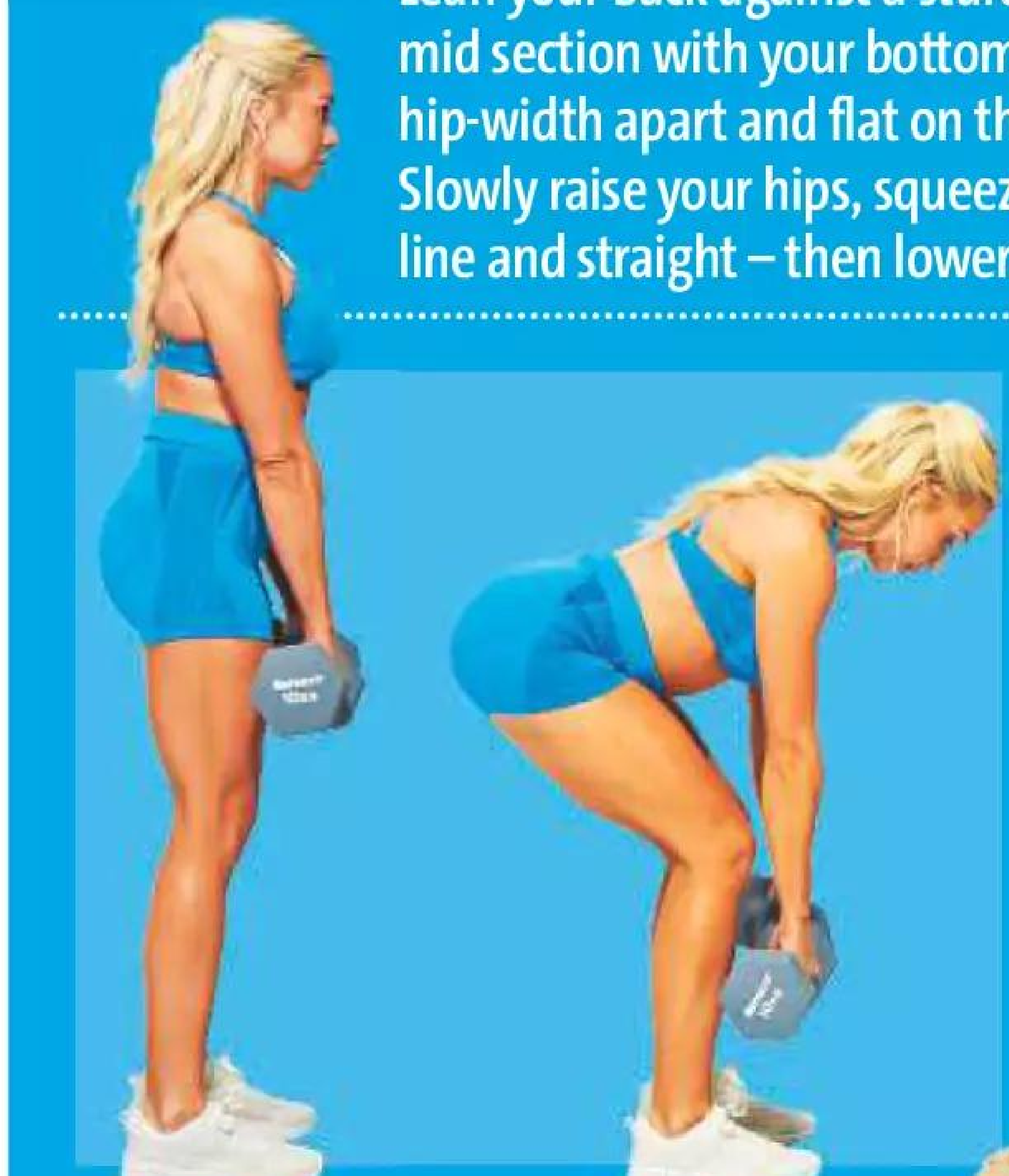
Get Great Glutes

Do these exercises for 12-15 reps, depending on how challenging your dumbbells are, for three rounds



Supported glute bridge

Lean your back against a sturdy bench or sofa, so it hits your back at the mid section with your bottom hovering off the floor. Your feet should be hip-width apart and flat on the floor, with a weight rested on your hips. Slowly raise your hips, squeezing your glutes – keeping your spine in line and straight – then lower.

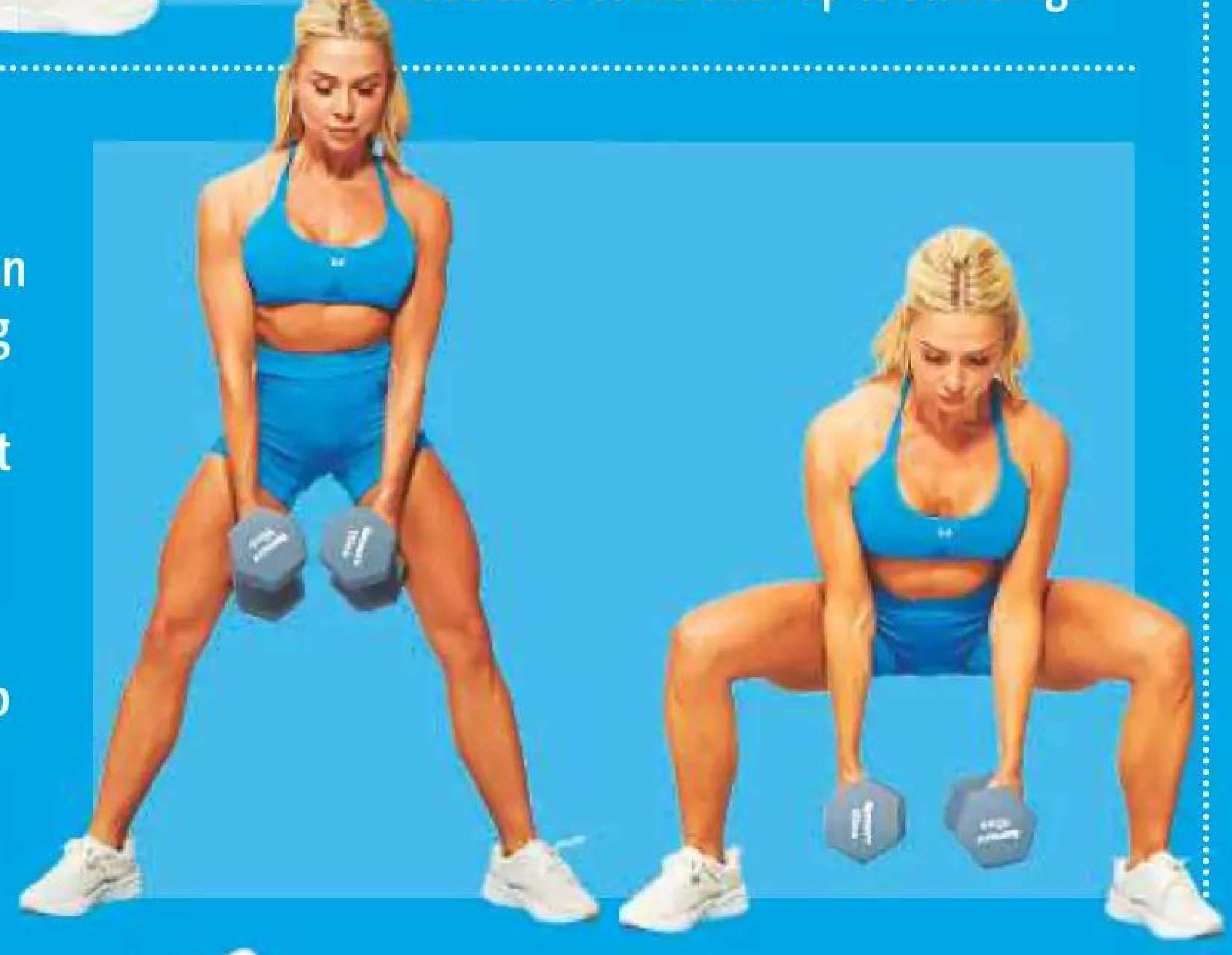


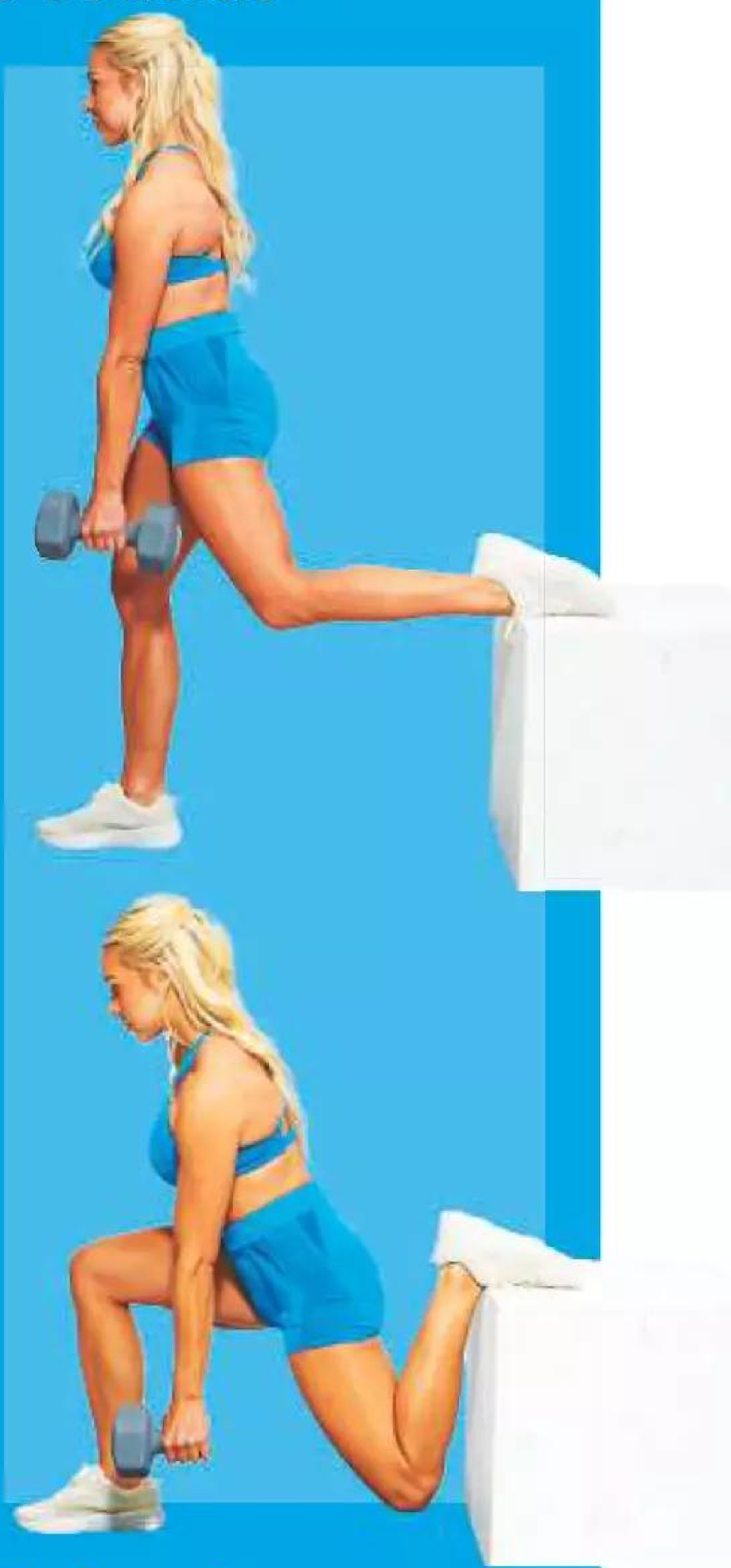
Deadlift

Holding the weights in front of you, stand with your feet hip-width apart, core engaged and shoulders pulled back and down. Tracking the weights down the front of your legs, hinge at your hips to lower, keeping your back and neck straight. You can slightly bend your knees and pause at the bottom of the movement, before you activate your muscles to come back up to standing.

Sumo squat

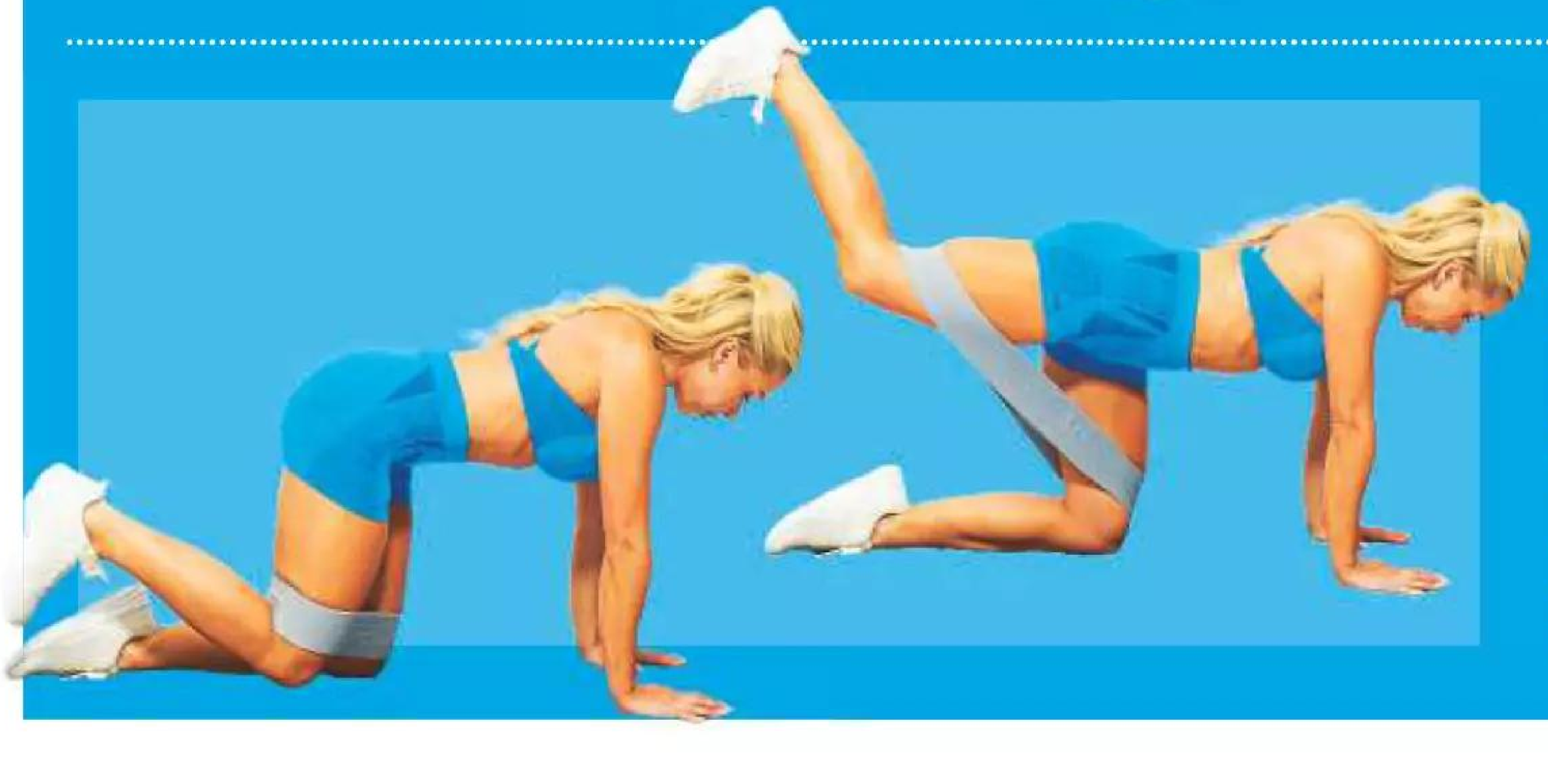
Starting with feet wider than hip-width apart and holding the weights between your legs, keep your back straight and slightly hinge forward from your hips. Lower the weights to the floor as you bend your knees into a deep plié, ensuring that your knees track over your toes. Extend back up and repeat.





Bulgarian split squat

Sit on a bench or chair and step forward to the point where your foot has extended – this is where you should place your standing leg. Balance the other leg on the bench behind you, with top of your foot facing down, and hold the weight in the opposite hand to your standing leg. Slowly lower so your back knee almost kisses the floor, then extend back up. After your first set, switch legs and repeat.



Donkey kick

Placing a resistance band just above your knees, start on all fours – knees aligned with your hips, and hands underneath your shoulders. Keeping your first leg at a right angle, swing it back, raising your heel towards the ceiling, then replace and repeat, keeping the knee on the working leg hovering off the floor. Do a set on each leg.

EAT WELL, LIVE BETTER

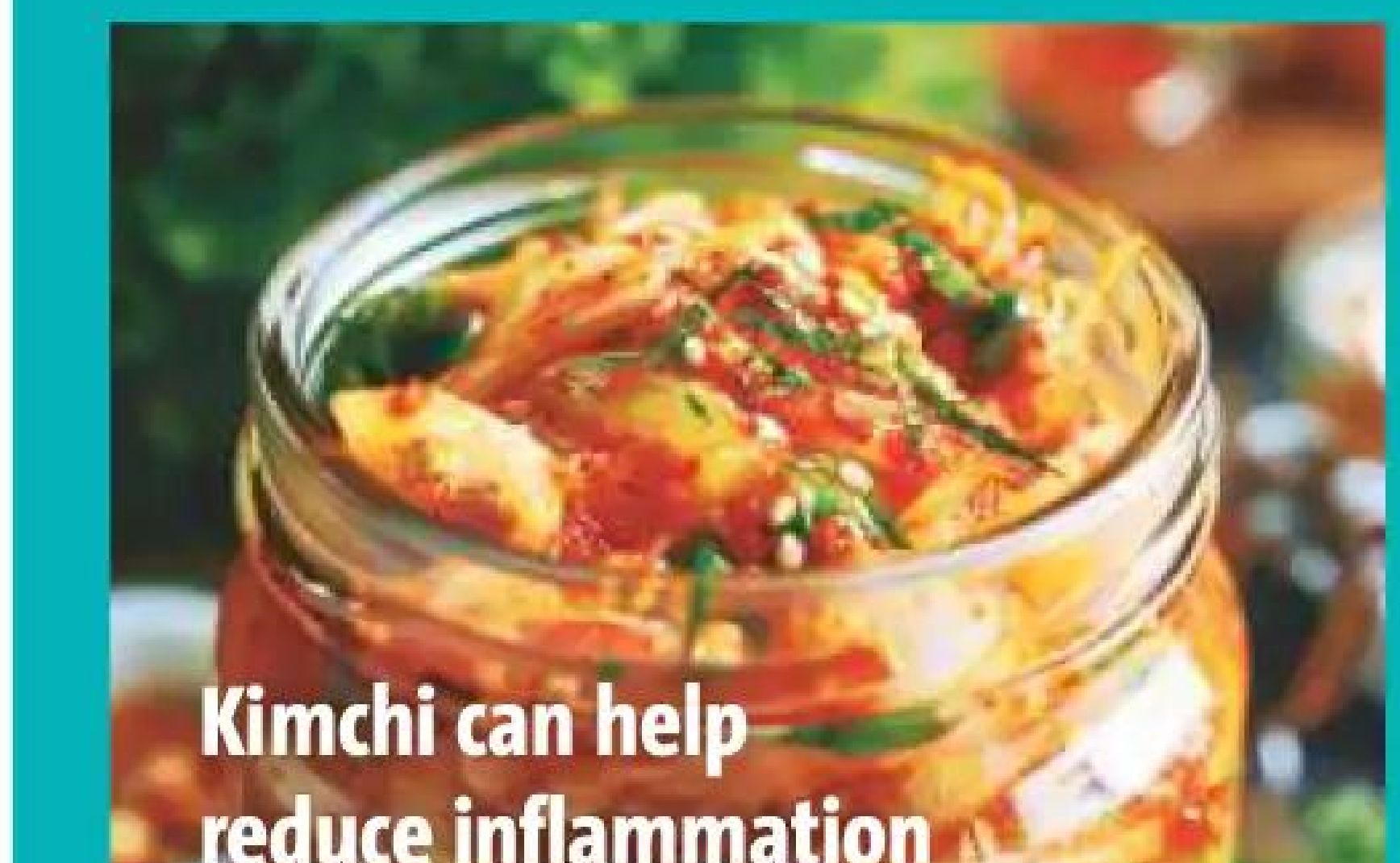
From filling up on full-fat milk to adding kimchi to salads, small changes can have big results...

Forget the fads – according to one expert, tiny changes to your diet could all stack up to make a massive difference to your health and well-being. Here, Dr Federica Amati, head nutritionist at ZOE, the science and nutrition company, and author of *Sunday Times* best seller, *Every Body Should Know This*, shares her simple swaps and strategies to help you thrive.

Dr Federica Amati

Add one food to your diet

'Kimchi is one of those amazing fermented foods that adds flavour, spice and texture to your meals,' explains Dr Federica Amati. 'They are packed with probiotic strains of bacteria that have turned the cabbage and the chilli inside the kimchi into this delicious savoury awesomeness. Adding a bit to your meals every day can really help support your gut microbiome in a way that reduces unnecessary inflammation. There have been quite a few randomised controlled trials using it for things like type two diabetes, obesity and hunger. It's a really good food to add to your regular shop and to start adding to your salads, soups and other dishes.'



Kimchi can help reduce inflammation

And Dr Federica is a fan of other gut-friendly foods too. She adds, 'Go for natural, unflavoured kefir and yogurt, both are probiotic and great for your gut. Sauerkraut is just cabbage and salt – mix both together in a glass jar – and add a spoonful to your greens.'

Splash out on oil

Olive oil is worth the splurge

Dr Federica says, 'Cooking in seed oil [sunflower, rapeseed, corn] rather than butter reduces your risk of disease. The absolute best is olive oil because the benefits have been linked to antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. You don't have to use extra-virgin olive oil, just use that to dress food. The price of oil overall has become quite expensive, but people are happy paying £12 for a bottle of wine, yet reluctant to pay £11 for a bottle of olive oil even though it's an investment to your health – and it'll last a good while!'

Dr Federica also recommends making your own dressings, 'Steer away from processed by making your own salad dressing using extra-virgin olive oil, vinegar, herbs, garlic and lemon. If you like it creamy, add in a tiny bit of mustard for texture, or even a bit of kefir,' she adds.

Simple swaps can help you thrive

Cutting fat can cut vitamins, too

Don't fear full-fat milk

'Milk and dairy products naturally have around 5% fat, and skimming them is an industrial process which only removes about 2% fat but, in the process, vitamins like A and D are removed too. There's no real advantage to skimmed or low-fat dairy because in essence you're losing goodness,' Dr Federica tells us. 'Animal fats like pork, beef and processed meat like sausages aren't that good for your health, that doesn't mean never eat them, but they shouldn't be your primary source of fat. Quality of fat is very important.

'It's not about having a low-fat diet, but a diet where the majority of your fat comes from good sources.' Other good sources include nuts, avocado, olives, fish, such as salmon and mackerel, and leaner meats including skinless chicken and turkey.'

Mix it up

While recommended advice suggests eating 30 plant types every week for a positive effect on the health of your gut microbiome, make it easier by buying mixed varieties of seeds, beans and grains. 'What I love about mixed versions of nuts, beans and others, is that they are all cheaper to buy than individual packets. Supermarkets sell mixed packages, but they may be on the bottom shelf with no fancy packaging. A mixed-grain bag has quinoa, barley and lentils, and a mixed-seed bag might have sesame, sunflower and pumpkin, perhaps these are all varieties you might not ordinarily buy.'

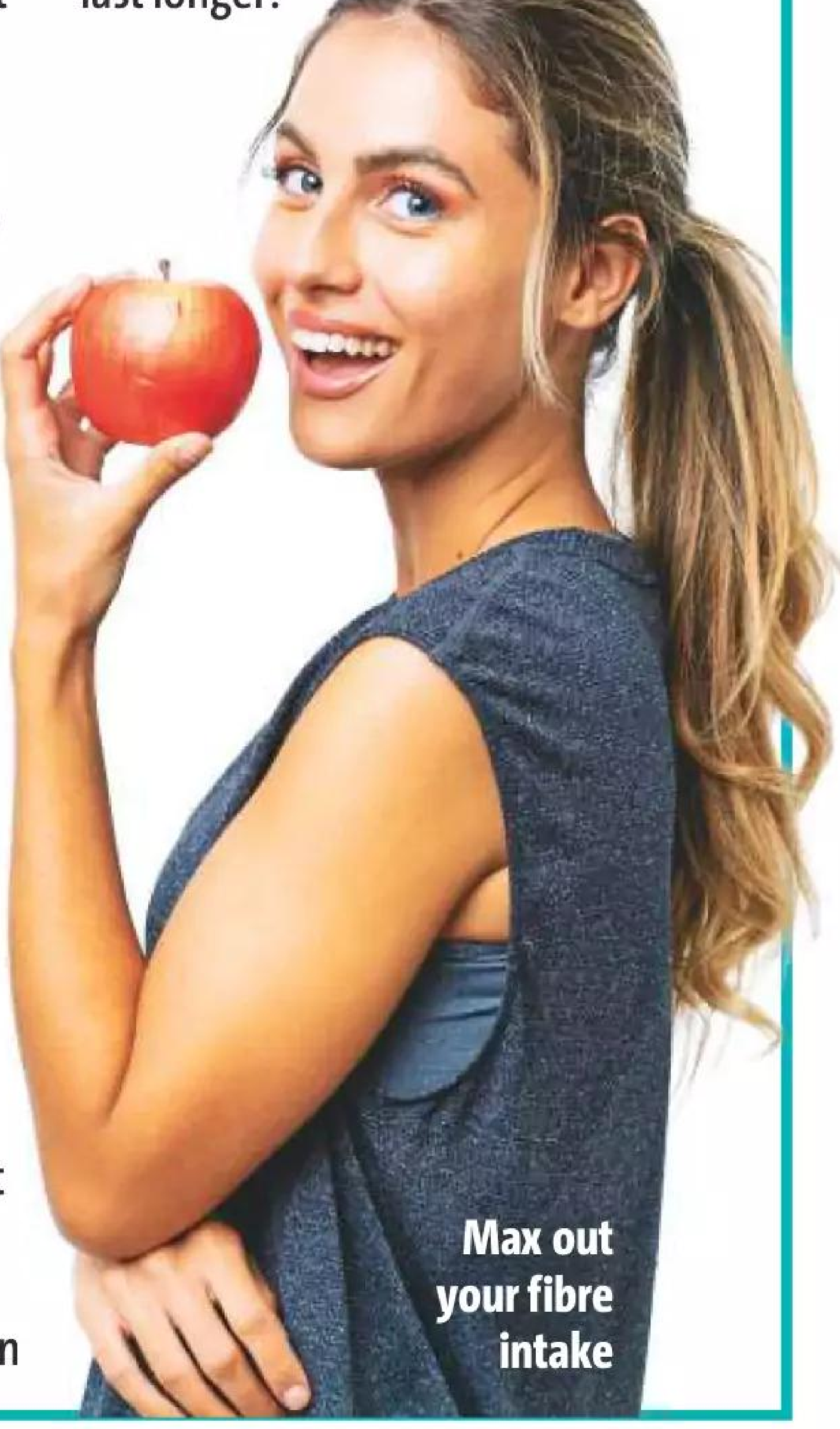
Buy mixed for an easy win

She adds, 'Go to the really unsexy food aisles in the supermarket and find the pearl barley, find the spelt, find the buckwheat. These are all good swaps for rice if you batch-cook them – you can keep them in the fridge and add them to all sorts.'

Eat whole fruit

'We all know we need to eat plenty of fruit, as well as veg, nuts and seeds – it's not a new message – but we are doing badly on it in the UK and the majority of us don't get enough,' Dr Federica warns. 'There's some confusion now about fructose in fruit, with people being concerned about the amount of sugar that comes with eating fruit, but to be really clear – eat the whole fruit or chop it into a fruit salad.

'We've demonised whole fruits quite a lot in this country, so people don't have enough in their diet, and when I say whole fruits, I really mean not blended or juiced, but eating the whole apple or banana. Fruit is really important for improving longevity and reducing disease, especially heart disease, and the benefits aren't the same with cartons of fruit juice or a store-bought smoothie. Any variety of fruit is good, but berries are best because they contain the most antioxidants, improve blood sugar and contain the most fibre. Go for frozen too, as they're cheaper and last longer!'



Max out your fibre intake

By Sofia Zagzoule, **Pictures** Adobe Stock, Dain Rhys Evans

SMARTER SCO

MYPROTEIN
VANILLA ICE CREAM
99 KCAL

HALO TOP
360 kCal PER TUB
Ice Cream
Gooey Brownie

M&S FOOD
VANILLA ICED DESSERT
250 CALORIES PER TUB

ORGANIC
Yeo Valley ORGANIC
FROZEN KEFIR
BLUEBERRY
14

SALTED CARAMEL
Jude's
94

WINNER

MYPROTEIN VANILLA ICE CREAM

Iceland, £4

Thick, chewy and noticeably chalky, this ice cream feels engineered more for function than flavour. It's got a weirdly gummy, dense texture and the vanilla is more like a polite suggestion than a real presence. It's almost like eating frozen protein powder. Good for your macros, bad for your soul.

★

HALO TOP BROWNIE GOOEY ICE CREAM

Sainsbury's, £5.25

This one comes out swinging with swirls of chocolate fudge and brownie bites that manage to feel indulgent, even if the base has a slightly whipped, airy quality. The flavour is classic chocolate-fudge-cake-in-a-tub and, while it doesn't quite hit the richness of a full-fat pint, the brownie chunks pull their weight and make each bite feel satisfying. A respectable cheat treat.

★★★

M&S LOW FAT MADAGASCAN VANILLA ICE CREAM

M&S, £4

Clean, creamy and classic. This one doesn't try to reinvent the wheel – it's just a solid vanilla ice cream with a gentle, real-tasting flavour and smooth finish. There's no weird aftertaste, no icy texture, and no fuss. It's not wildly exciting, but it is dependable. Perfect with fruit, pudding or on its own.

★★★★

YEO VALLEY ORGANIC BLUEBERRY FROZEN KEFIR

Waitrose, £4

Packed with live cultures, this is a smart and satisfying choice for anyone looking to support their gut health. The blueberry's there, but it's not overwhelming, adding a subtle fruity lift to the creamy base. The result is clean and refreshing, with a texture that feels luxurious without being heavy. Wellness with a decadent twist.

★★★★

JUDE'S LOW CAL SALTED CARAMEL ICE CREAM

Sainsbury's, £5

Rich and surprisingly velvety, this one hits all the right notes. The caramel isn't just sweet – it's golden, buttery and perfectly balanced with a little pop of salt that makes each spoonful more addictive than the last. The texture is gorgeously silky and it melts in the mouth like a dream. If no one told us this was a lighter option, we'd never have known.

★★★★★

OPS

Looking for a lighter lick? We tested low-calorie ice creams to find the tastiest tubs…

lighten up!
BEN&JERRY'S
Vanilla Brownie

BEN & JERRY'S LIGHTEN UP VANILLA FUDGE BROWNIE ICE CREAM

Tesco, £5.20

While it promises a lighter take, this version feels like it's trying too hard to be good for you. The vanilla base lacks depth and the brownie chunks, though indulgent, are few and far between, making the experience feel a little sparse. It's not terrible, but we found ourselves missing the full-fat magic.

★★

Coppa Maga
grapefruit & bergamot

COPPA DELLA MAGA GRAPEFRUIT & BERGAMOT

coppadellamaga.co.uk, £5.99

This is not your average freezer aisle find. It's light, floral and citrusy in a really sophisticated way. The grapefruit gives it a zingy sharpness, while the bergamot adds a soft, perfumed twist. It's more sorbet than ice cream, but it's silky and delicate. One for refined palates.

★★★

ORGANIC
Yeo Valley
ORGANIC
FROZEN KEFIR
STRAWBERRY

YEO VALLEY ORGANIC STRAWBERRY FROZEN KEFIR

Waitrose, £4

Like its blueberry twin, this leans closer to sorbet than traditional ice cream. The strawberry tastes like actual fruit rather than syrup, and the tartness from the kefir keeps it from being too sweet. It's a little icy, but it brings a brightness that feels perfect for palate-cleansing moments.

★★★

BEN&JERRY'S
Chocolate Cookie Dough

BEN & JERRY'S LIGHTEN UP CHOCOLATE COOKIE DOUGH ICE CREAM

Sainsbury's, £5.20

This fresh spin on a classic doesn't skimp on the good stuff. You still get that rich chocolatey scoop and those gloriously chunky hunks of cookie dough. It's sweet and satisfyingly creamy, but with a slightly airier texture that makes it feel less heavy. A clever balance of treat and tweak.

★★★★

M&S
FOOD
BIRTHDAY CAKE
ICED DESSERT
280
CALORIES
PER TUB

M&S LOW FAT BIRTHDAY CAKE ICE CREAM

Ocado, £4

Visually, it's got that party-in-a-tub look – swirls, sprinkles and pastel pink vibes galore. But once you get past the aesthetic, it's a bit of a letdown. The flavour leans too heavily into artificial vanilla and synthetic frosting territory, with an aftertaste that lingers longer than you'd like. More style than substance.

★★

By Helena Holdsworth, **Pictures** Marco Vittur

Feel fabulous
THIS SUMMER!

Healthy & nourishing

Dig into these meals that pack flavour and taste from vegan recipe kit experts Grubby

Crispy oyster mushroom burgers with pesto mayo

Serves 2 *Takes* 35min

- 2 potatoes, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- Vegetable oil, for drizzling
- 1tsp dried oregano
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 250g cherry tomatoes
- 300g oyster mushrooms, large ones torn in half
- 1tbsp soy sauce
- 3tbsp cornflour
- 1tbsp nutritional yeast
- 2tbsp plant-based mayo
- 1tbsp plant-based green pesto
- Handful of rocket
- 1tsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 ciabatta rolls, halved

1 *Preheat the oven to 220°C/fan 200°C. Combine the potatoes and garlic on a baking tray, and drizzle with vegetable oil. Sprinkle over the oregano and a pinch of salt and pepper. Roast for 25-30min until golden brown, adding the cherry tomatoes to the tray for the final 10min.*

2 *Meanwhile, tip the mushrooms into a large bowl and pour over the soy sauce. Leave to soak for 2-3min while you heat a generous drizzle of vegetable oil in a large frying pan over a medium-high heat. Once the mushrooms have soaked, add the cornflour and nutritional yeast to the bowl and mix well. Once the oil is hot, fry the mushrooms for 3-4min on each side until golden brown and crispy. Once cooked, set aside.*

3 *For the pesto mayo, mix the mayo, pesto and a pinch of pepper together in a small bowl, then set aside. In a separate large bowl, combine the rocket and balsamic vinegar and toss well.*

4 *Place the ciabatta rolls in the oven for 2-3min until warmed through and starting to crisp.*

5 *To serve, spread the base of each roll with the pesto mayo, then stack the crispy mushrooms on top, followed by the oven-roasted tomatoes and some of the rocket. Serve with the crispy potatoes and the remaining rocket and tomatoes.*

Cashew & avocado pesto pasta

Serves 2 *Takes* 20min

- 60g cashews
- 1 courgette, sliced into 1cm rounds
- 200g rigatoni or penne pasta
- 1 avocado, peeled and stoned
- Handful of basil
- 1tbsp nutritional yeast
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 lemon
- 100g sun-dried tomatoes in oil
- Handful of rocket

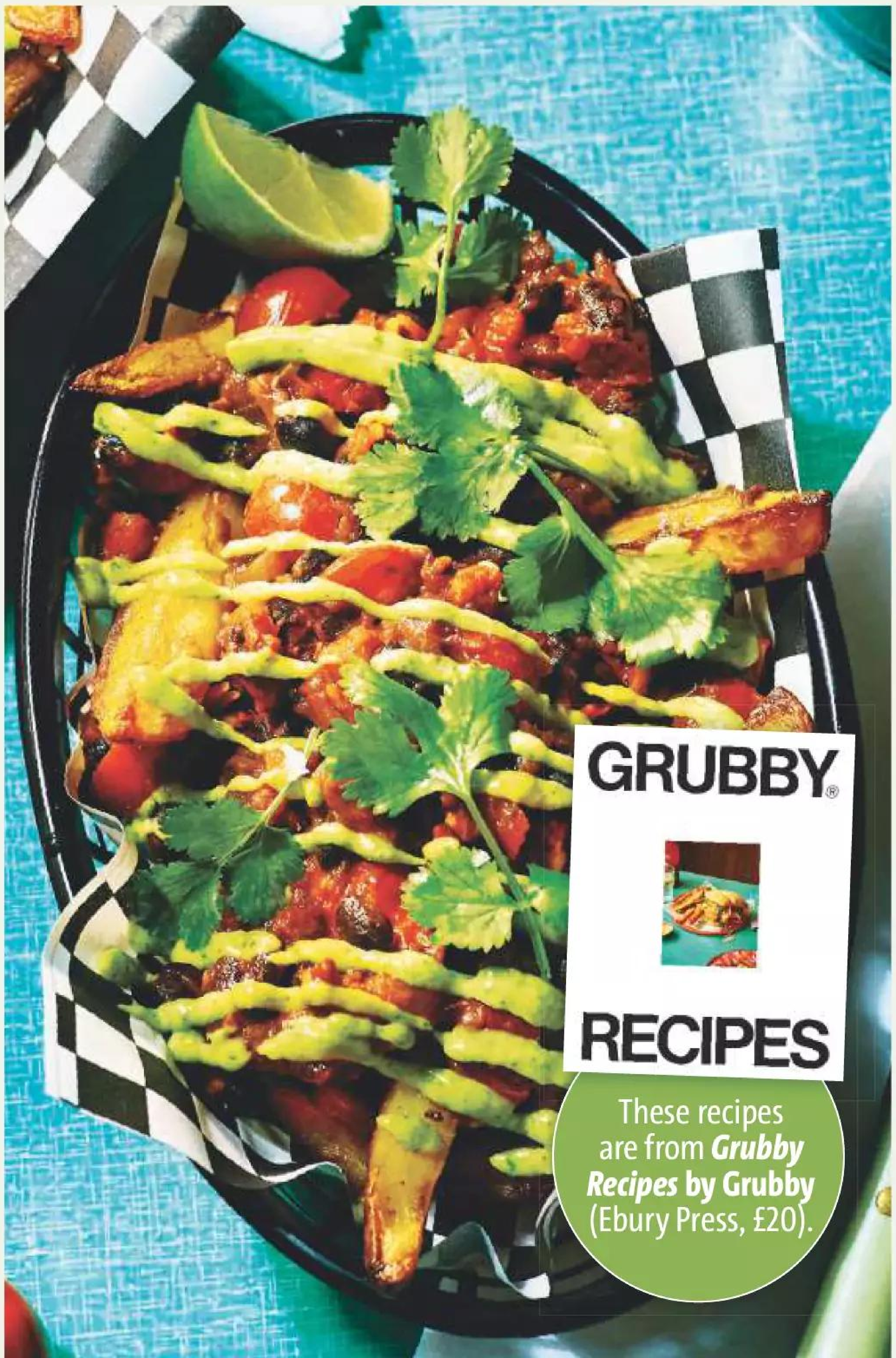
1 *Tip the cashews into a large saucepan of boiling water and simmer for 5min. Using a slotted spoon, remove the cashews from the pan and set aside in a bowl. Bring the pan of water back to the boil, add the pasta, and simmer for 10min.*

2 *To make the pesto, add the avocado flesh to a blender, along with the basil, cashew nuts, nutritional yeast, garlic, 2tbsp of olive oil and 150ml water. Squeeze in half the lemon and blitz until smooth.*

3 *Heat a good drizzle of olive oil in a deep-sided frying pan over a high heat. Add the courgette slices and cook for 2-3min on each side until charred, then take off the heat.*

4 *Once the pasta is cooked, loosely drain and return to the pan over a low heat, stirring through the pesto, courgette slices and sun-dried tomatoes. Warm through for 2min.*

5 *Spoon the pesto pasta into serving bowls and top with a handful of fresh rocket, and a good squeeze of the remaining lemon.*



These recipes are from ***Grubby Recipes* by Grubby** (Ebury Press, £20).

Smoky pulled aubergine & black bean-loaded fries with green goddess sauce

Serves 2 *Takes* 35min

- 1 aubergine, halved lengthways
- Vegetable oil, for drizzling
- 3 potatoes, chopped into 1cm-thick fries
- 1 red onion, finely diced
- 2 garlic cloves, 1 crushed, 1 peeled
- 1tbsp tomato purée
- 1tbsp ancho chilli powder (or smoked paprika)
- 1tsp dried oregano
- 400g can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 vegetable stock cube
- 150g cherry tomatoes, roughly chopped
- 1 avocado, peeled and stoned
- Handful of coriander
- 1 lime

1 *Preheat the oven to 220°C/fan 200°C. Score the flesh of the aubergine in a criss-cross pattern about 1cm deep. Place on a baking tray with a drizzle of vegetable oil and roast for 20-25min, until soft and melty.*

2 *Meanwhile, toss the fries on a second baking tray with a drizzle of vegetable oil and a pinch of salt. Roast for 20-25min until golden.*

3 *Heat a drizzle of vegetable oil in a deep-sided pan over a medium-high heat. Add the onion and fry for 3-4min until soft, then add the crushed garlic, tomato purée, ancho chilli powder and oregano. Fry for 1-2min more, then add the black beans to the pan. Crumble in the stock cube and pour over 200ml boiling water. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and leave to simmer for 15min.*

4 *Once the aubergine is ready, remove from the oven and remove and discard the skin. Pull apart the flesh and add to the black bean mix. Add the cherry tomatoes to the pan. Stir and leave to simmer while you wait for the fries to finish cooking.*

5 *Peel and stone the avocado and add to a blender with the peeled garlic clove and two-thirds of the coriander and 3tbsp of water. Squeeze in the lime juice and blend until smooth. Chop the remaining coriander.*

6 *Serve the fries covered in the pulled aubergine mix, topped with the avocado sauce. Finish with the remaining coriander.*

By Hayley Merrick **Recipes** Grubby **Pictures** Uyen Luu

Mood-boosting treats

Delicious plant-based delights packed with ingredients to make you feel good

Tip

The green veg and avocado boost the nutrition of this cake by adding vitamins and minerals, while the banana naturally sweetens the batter and the yogurt is great for the gut

Hidden vegetable chocolate fudge cake

Serves *10* *takes* *1hr 12min, plus cooling*

FOR THE CHOCOLATE CAKE

- **60ml olive oil, plus extra for greasing**
- **1 medium courgette, grated**
- **180ml plant-based milk**
- **½tbsp apple cider vinegar**
- **105g coconut sugar**
- **80g mashed banana or unsweetened shop-bought apple sauce**
- **1tbsp ground flaxseed**
- **1tsp vanilla extract**
- **175g plain flour or use gluten-free flour**
- **38g unsweetened cocoa powder**
- **1¼tsp baking powder**
- **¼tsp bicarbonate of soda**
- **A pinch of salt**
- **85g/3oz dark chocolate chips**

FOR THE FROSTING

- **1 ripe avocado, halved, pitted and peeled (180g flesh)**
- **80ml maple syrup**
- **25g unsweetened cocoa powder**
- **2tbsp thick coconut yogurt**
- **1tsp vanilla extract**
- **A pinch of salt**
- **A handful of fresh berries (eg strawberries, blueberries) or pomegranate seeds, and 1tbsp chopped dark chocolate, to decorate**

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C. Grease and line a 20cm medium-deep round cake tin with baking paper.

2 Place the grated courgette in a clean tea towel to drain. Leave for 10min, then squeeze out all the excess water (you will need 100g courgette).

3 Meanwhile, in a large mixing bowl, whisk together the milk and vinegar, then leave to curdle for 5min. Add the coconut sugar, mashed banana or apple sauce, olive oil, ground flaxseed and vanilla and whisk to combine.

4 Sift in the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder and bicarbonate of soda and add the salt. Whisk to a smooth, thick batter. Fold in the chocolate chips and the squeezed-out grated courgette (breaking it apart) until combined.

5 Pour the batter into the tin and smooth over. Bake for 45-47min, until an inserted skewer comes out clean around the edges but may have some specks from the middle. Leave to rest in the tin for 10min, then carefully lift out onto a wire rack and leave to cool fully.

6 For the frosting, roughly mash the avocado flesh, then add to a small blender with the remaining ingredients and blend until smooth.

7 Place the cake on a serving plate, spread over the frosting, then decorate with the fresh berries or pomegranate seeds and chopped chocolate. Eat straight away, or refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-5 days, then bring to room temperature before serving.

Cherry coconut oat crumble slices

Makes 9-16 Takes 50min, plus cooling

FOR THE CHERRY CHIA JAM
- 400g fresh cherries, pitted weight (approx 2 punnets)
- 4tbsp maple syrup
- 1tsp vanilla extract
- 4tbsp chia seeds

FOR THE OAT SLICES
- 1 ripe banana, mashed well
- 4tbsp maple syrup
- 4tbsp runny smooth almond butter
- 4tbsp melted coconut oil
- 1tsp vanilla extract
- 150g oat flour
- 150g rolled oats
- 4tbsp desiccated coconut
- 2tbsp hulled hemp seeds
- 1tsp ground cinnamon
- 1tsp baking powder
- A pinch of salt

FOR THE CRUMBLE TOPPING
- 50g rolled oats
- 2tbsp desiccated coconut

1 For the jam, add the cherries, maple syrup and vanilla to a saucepan and bring to the boil over a high heat. Cook with a lid on, stirring occasionally, for 10min, then remove the lid and cook for 5min more. The cherries will be sticky and glossy. Put the cherries and chia seeds in a blender and blend until smooth. Pour into a heatproof jar and cool for 30min.

2 Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C and line a 20cm square baking tin with baking paper.

3 For the oat slices, stir together the banana, maple syrup, almond butter, coconut oil and vanilla in a large mixing bowl until smooth. Add all the remaining ingredients and stir to a sticky mix. Press three-quarters of the mix into the baking tin and smooth over. Bake for 5min.

4 Meanwhile, add the oats and desiccated coconut for the crumble topping to the remaining oat mix and stir well. Remove the tin from the oven (leave the oven on) and spread the cherry chia jam all over the base. Sprinkle over the topping and press down lightly. Return to the oven for 15min until the top is golden brown. Leave to cool in the tin on a wire rack for 20min before carefully lifting out the mixture and cooling fully on the rack.

5 Use a large, sharp knife to slice into 9 or 16 squares and eat straight away. Refrigerate leftover bars in a sealed container for 3-5 days.

Tip

These are packed with mind-boosting wholegrain oats to keep energy levels stable, plus bananas that contain vitamin B6, which keep your immune system healthy.

Feel Good Kitchen
80 PLANT-BASED RECIPES TO BOOST YOUR MOOD AND NOURISH YOUR BRAIN
Amy Lanza

These recipes are from *Feel Good Kitchen*, **by Amy Lanza** (Nourish Books, £22)

By Hayley Merrick **Recipes and pictures** Amy Lanza.

Unprocess your kitchen

Build a healthy balanced diet with these pure and simple recipes

Rainbow rice bowl

Serves 2 Takes 30min

- 100g long-grain brown rice
- 1 large carrot, peeled and julienned or grated
- 2 medium cooked vac-packed beetroots, sliced
- ⅓ cucumber, sliced into half moons
- 1 avocado, peeled, de-stoned, and sliced
- 8 radishes, sliced
- 4tbsp kimchi or sauerkraut
- 3tsp toasted white or black sesame seeds
- 2 spring onions, finely sliced

FOR THE DRESSING

- Juice of 1 lime
- 1tsp brown sugar or maple syrup
- 2tbsp tamari or soy sauce
- 2tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 4tsp sesame oil

1 *Cook the rice according to the packet instructions. Drain into a sieve, then place the sieve on top of the now empty pan, cover with a tea towel and leave to one side to steam dry.*

2 *Meanwhile, prepare the vegetables and whisk together the dressing ingredients.*

3 *Pile the rice into a bowl (either still warm or room temperature), then add all the vegetables and the dressing. Toss well, then scatter with the sesame seeds and spring onions.*

Tip

Try any of these optional additions: sliced red pepper, roasted tofu cubes, boiled eggs, grilled chicken or tuna

Roast mushrooms with polenta & salsa verde

Serves 4 *Takes* 40min

- 2 small red onions, each cut into 8 wedges
- 6 garlic cloves, unpeeled
- 300g portobello mushrooms (about 4 mushrooms), cut into 3cm pieces
- 300g oyster or chestnut mushrooms, ripped or cut into 3cm pieces
- 250g cherry tomatoes, pierced with the tip of a knife
- 1tbsp thyme leaves
- 3tbsp olive oil
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE POLENTA

- 250g quick-cook polenta
- 50g butter (or use 5tbsp extra-virgin olive oil)
- 75g Parmesan (or use vegan alternative), grated, plus extra to serve

FOR THE SALSA VERDE

- 1 small garlic clove, grated
- 1½tbsp capers, chopped
- 40g parsley leaves, finely chopped
- 1½tsp Dijon mustard
- Zest and juice of 1 small lemon
- 5tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

1 *Preheat the oven to 220°C/fan 200°C fan and line your largest baking sheet with baking paper.*

2 *Spread out the onions and garlic on the baking sheet, then top with the mushrooms and tomatoes, ensuring they're evenly spaced. Sprinkle over the thyme, drizzle with the oil, and season with plenty of salt and pepper. Place in the oven for 30min, tossing halfway, until the mushrooms are golden and crisp on the edges but still tender inside.*

3 *Meanwhile, place the polenta in a medium saucepan along with 1tsp salt and 1.2ltr cold water, and whisk to combine. Set over a medium heat and bring to the boil. When simmering, whisk continuously for about 6-8min until smooth and thickened, turning down the heat if the polenta begins to spit. Stir in the butter and Parmesan, then remove from the heat and keep warm while you finish off everything else.*

4 *To make the salsa verde, combine all the ingredients in a small bowl with ½tbsp cold water and season with a little salt and pepper.*

5 *To serve, spoon the polenta onto a big serving dish or individual plates and sit the mushrooms, onions, and tomatoes on top (peel the garlic and add it to the plates, too). Spoon over some salsa verde and scatter with a little extra Parmesan.*

RHIANNON LAMBERT
The Unprocessed Plate
Simple, flavourful UPF-free recipes to transform your life

Tip

I love to eat these straight out the freezer sprinkled with a tiny pinch of flaky salt!

These recipes are from ***The Unprocessed Plate: Simple, Flavourful UPF-free Recipes to Transform Your Life*** by **Rhiannon Lambert**, out 19 June (DK RED, £20)

Chocolate, peanut & date bars

Makes 15 *Takes* 25min

- 75g jumbo or rolled oats
- 300g pitted Medjool dates
- 4tbsp smooth peanut butter
- 1½tsp vanilla extract
- ¼tsp sea salt
- 80g unsalted roasted peanuts
- 75g dark chocolate (at least 75% cocoa solids), broken into small pieces
- 2tsp coconut oil

1 *Line a 20cm square cake tin with baking paper, with plenty of overhang. Place the oats in a blender or food processor and blitz to a fine flour, then tip into a bowl and set aside.*

2 *Place the dates in the blender or food processor (no need to clean it) with the peanut butter, vanilla, and salt. Roughly blitz, then slowly add 75ml water until you have a smooth, thick paste. Be sure to scrape down the sides occasionally. Remove 300g of the date mix to a bowl and set aside.*

3 *Add the oat flour back to the blender or food processor with the remaining date mix and pulse a few times until nicely combined. Tip the mixture into the base of the lined pan and use wet fingertips to spread it into a smooth layer that fills the tin.*

4 *Spread the remaining date mixture on top, smoothing it with a spatula. Evenly sprinkle over the nuts, pushing them in a little. Place in the freezer for at least 6hrs or ideally overnight until frozen and firm.*

5 *Lift the frozen slab out of the tin and slice into 15 bars. Line a baking sheet with baking paper.*

6 *Add the chocolate and coconut oil to a heatproof bowl set over a pan of barely simmering water and heat until just melted, stirring to combine. Alternatively, heat in a microwave on the lowest setting in 30sec blasts, stirring between each, until just melted.*

7 *Working one at a time, submerge the bars in the melted chocolate, using two forks to turn them. Lift out of the bowl using the forks, allowing the excess chocolate to drip back into the bowl, then transfer them to the lined sheet. Return the sheet to the freezer or fridge for at least 15min until the chocolate is set.*

By Hayley Merrick **Recipes** Rhiannon Lambert **Pictures** Claire Winfield

It's time to BBQ!

These healthy grilling recipes from Slimming World are perfect for the warmer weather

Grilled king prawns with quinoa & mango salsa

Serves 4 *Ready in* 30 minutes

- 150g dried quinoa
- 1 red onion, finely chopped
- Zest and juice of 2 limes, plus wedges to serve
- 1 mango, peeled, stoned and flesh finely chopped
- 30g fresh coriander, finely chopped
- 1 red chilli, finely chopped
- 200g cherry tomatoes, halved
- ½ cucumber, halved lengthways, deseeded and sliced
- 300g raw peeled king prawns
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- Low-calorie cooking spray

1 *If you're using a charcoal barbecue, light it now. Cook the quinoa following the pack instructions, then drain and keep warm.*
2 *Meanwhile, divide the red onion between a small bowl and a large bowl. Pour half the lime juice over the onion in the small bowl, then mix in the mango, half the coriander and the chilli to make the salsa. Season and set aside.*
3 *Add the quinoa, tomatoes, cucumber and remaining coriander to the large bowl. Pour over the rest of the lime juice and toss. Mix the prawns with the lime zest and garlic.*
4 *Spritz with low-calorie cooking spray and cook on the barbecue for 2-3 minutes on the hottest part, turning halfway, until pink and charred, or cook under the grill.*
5 *Serve the prawns with the quinoa, mango salsa and lime wedges.*

Tip

As an alternative, you can cook the chicken and pak choi in the oven at 190°C/fan 170°C/gas 5

Lime & chilli chicken thighs with sticky rice

Serves 4 *Ready in* 50 minutes, plus marinating

- 1 level tbsp light brown soft sugar
- 3tbsp fish sauce
- 3 limes, 2 zested and juiced, 1 cut into wedges
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 lemongrass stalks, outer layers discarded, and stalks chopped
- 8 skinless and boneless chicken thighs, all visible fat removed
- Low-calorie cooking spray
- 4 pak choi, halved lengthways
- 15g fresh coriander, roughly chopped
- 200g boiled dried Thai sticky rice, to serve

1 *Mix the sugar, fish sauce, lime zest and juice, chilli and garlic in a large glass bowl. Spoon out half the mixture into a smaller bowl and leave to chill (this will be your dressing).*

2 *Add the lemongrass and chicken to the large glass bowl. Turn to coat, then cover and chill in the fridge for at least 2 hours. Take both out of the fridge 30 minutes before you want to cook. If you're using a charcoal barbecue, light it now.*

3 *Meanwhile, lift the chicken out of the marinade and spritz with low-calorie cooking spray. Place the chicken thighs on the barbecue and cook away from the hottest part for 4-5 minutes, turning occasionally, then move to the edges of the barbecue until cooked through.*

4 *Spray the pak choi with low-calorie cooking spray and cook alongside the chicken for the final 4-5 minutes, turning halfway, until tender and lightly charred.*

5 *Divide everything equally between 4 plates. Add the dressing, then scatter with the coriander. Serve with the rice and lime wedges.*

Continued over the page...

Tip

You can also pan fry the tofu, as an alternative

Teriyaki tofu skewers with crunchy rice salad

Serves 4 *Ready in* 50 minutes

- 2 level tbsp teriyaki sauce
- 3cm-piece fresh root ginger, peeled and grated
- 800g plain extra-firm tofu, drained and cut into an even number of bite-size cubes
- 2tbsp light soy sauce
- 2½tbsp rice vinegar
- ½ white cabbage, shredded
- 2 large carrots, coarsely grated
- 150g sugar snap peas, halved lengthways
- 15g fresh chives, chopped
- 1 bunch of spring onions, ½ finely sliced, ½ cut into 2.5cm pieces
- Low-calorie cooking spray
- 200g boiled dried brown rice
- 2 level tsp sesame seeds

1 *Mix together the teriyaki sauce and ginger. Pat the tofu dry with kitchen paper, then evenly brush over the teriyaki mixture. Set aside to marinate for 30 minutes. If you're using a charcoal barbecue, light it now.*

2 *Mix the soy sauce and vinegar together in a large bowl. Add the cabbage, carrots, sugar snap peas, chives and sliced spring onions, and toss well. Divide the tofu between 8 wooden skewers (pre-soak skewers in water for 30 minutes), alternating with a piece of spring onion.*

3 *Spritz with low-calorie cooking spray and barbecue away from the hottest part for 6-8 minutes until the tofu and spring onions have a light char – turn often and brush evenly with any leftover marinade.*

4 *Meanwhile, add the rice to the bowl of veg and gently toss to combine. Divide everything between 4 plates. Sprinkle half a level tsp of sesame seeds over each plate and serve.*

Slimming® WORLD

Marinated lamb steaks with thyme potatoes

Serves 4 *Ready in* 1 hour 45 minutes

- **2tsp sweet smoked paprika**
- **A pinch of dried red chilli flakes**
- **2 garlic cloves, crushed**
- **3tbsp red wine vinegar**
- **2tsp dried oregano**
- **4 sprigs of fresh thyme, leaves picked**
- **4 x 150g lamb leg steaks, all visible fat removed**
- **1 red onion, finely sliced**
- **Low-calorie cooking spray**
- **1kg red-skinned potatoes, cut into bite-size chunks**
- **4 red peppers**
- **400g cherry tomatoes, halved**
- **60g rocket**
- **20g fresh parsley, leaves roughly chopped**

1 *Tip the paprika, chilli flakes, garlic, 2tbsp vinegar, half the oregano and half the thyme into a large glass dish. Stir together, then add the lamb and season lightly. Turn the lamb in the marinade and set aside for 40 minutes.*

2 *Meanwhile, put half the onion in a bowl with the rest of the vinegar and oregano, adding a little salt. Toss to coat, then set aside. If you're using a charcoal barbecue, light it now.*

3 *Line a baking tray with foil and spray with low-calorie cooking spray and add the potatoes, the remaining onion and thyme, and lightly season. Spritz with a little more low-calorie cooking spray and toss until the potatoes are well coated.*

4 *Spread out in a single layer and fold the foil over the potatoes, so they're completely enveloped in a parcel. Slide the parcel onto the barbecue, then cook for 40 minutes, opening halfway to turn.*

5 *Cook the whole peppers alongside the potatoes directly over the heat, turning often, until softened and lightly charred. Pop in a bowl and cover.*

6 *Lift the lamb out of the marinade and pat dry with kitchen paper. Spritz with low-calorie cooking spray and barbecue directly over the heat for 4-5 minutes on each side until cooked to your liking. Set aside, keeping covered.*

7 *Meanwhile, add the tomatoes and rocket to the bowl of onion and toss. Peel the skin off the peppers, halve and remove the seeds, and roughly slice. Divide everything between 4 plates to serve.*

Tip

Alternatively, you can bake the potatoes open on a baking tray at 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6 and cook the lamb on griddle pan over a medium-high heat

Continued over the page...

Tip

The amaretti biscuits can be swapped for 2 ginger nuts instead. And you can char your peaches on the barbecue, if you fancy

Griddled peaches with ricotta and rosemary dust

Serves 4 Ready in 15 minutes

- 4 medium peaches, halved and stoned
- 125g ricotta cheese
- 125g plain quark
- Grated zest of 1 unwaxed lemon
- 2 level tsp vanilla bean paste
- 2 level tsp sweetener granules
- 1tsp finely chopped fresh rosemary leaves, plus sprigs to decorate
- 1 level tbsp caster sugar
- 4 amaretti biscuits, lightly crushed

1 Place a non-stick griddle pan over a high heat. Once it's hot, put the peaches in the pan cut side down and leave to char lightly for 2 minutes or until you've got those all-important griddle marks.

2 Mix the ricotta, quark, lemon zest, sweetener and vanilla paste together and set aside.

3 Using a pestle and mortar (or the end of a rolling pin), grind together the rosemary and sugar to create a fragrant 'dust'.

4 Divide the peaches between plates and serve with the ricotta, an even sprinkling of rosemary dust and crushed amaretti and the rosemary sprigs.

Margarita cheesecakes

Serves 4 *Ready in* 15 minutes, plus chilling

- 1 level tbsp low-fat spread
- 3 reduced-fat digestive biscuits
- 2 level tbsp sweetener granules
- 1 lime
- 100g extra-light plain soft cheese
- 300g plain quark
- 2 level tbsp tequila
- 1 level tsp orange-flavoured liqueur (such as Cointreau or Grand Marnier)

1 *Melt the spread in a small non-stick saucepan over a low heat.*
2 *Meanwhile, crush the biscuits in a sealable food bag. Stir the biscuits into the melted spread with ½ level tbsp sweetener and spoon the mixture into 4 x 200ml clip-top jars or dessert glasses.*
3 *Grate the zest from the lime into a bowl, setting some aside. Halve the lime and squeeze the juice from 1 half into the bowl. Beat with the soft cheese, quark, tequila, orange liqueur and the remaining sweetener until smooth.*
4 *Evenly spoon this mixture into the jars or glasses, cover and chill for at least 2 hours.*
5 *Thinly slice the remaining lime half and use the slices to decorate each dessert. Scatter over the reserved zest to serve.*

By Carly Honeyfield, **Pictures** Slimming World/Gareth Morgans. All recipes are taken from Slimming World's collection. Join your local Slimming World group or sign up online for even more recipes, guidance and support. To find your nearest group, visit slimmingworld.co.uk or call 0344 897 8000.

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Code BREAKER
Our Lives
I'd spent a childhood believing Mum had abandoned me. Then one day, Dad sat me down, and I learnt the shocking truth... By Helen Danso, 44
'I've missed you so much'
'Mum, is it really you?'

EARN UP TO £1000!
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DISCOVERED YOUR LONG-LOST FAMILY?

Helen Danso grew up believing her mum had abandoned her, until her dad revealed he'd kidnapped her from their home in Ghana and brought her to the UK. After his death, Helen finally spoke to her mother, who'd spent years trying to find her. Sadly, her mum died before they could meet, but Helen forged an amazing connection with the family she'd been stolen from.

Helen used The Story People to share her family reunion story, and you can too.

The Story People

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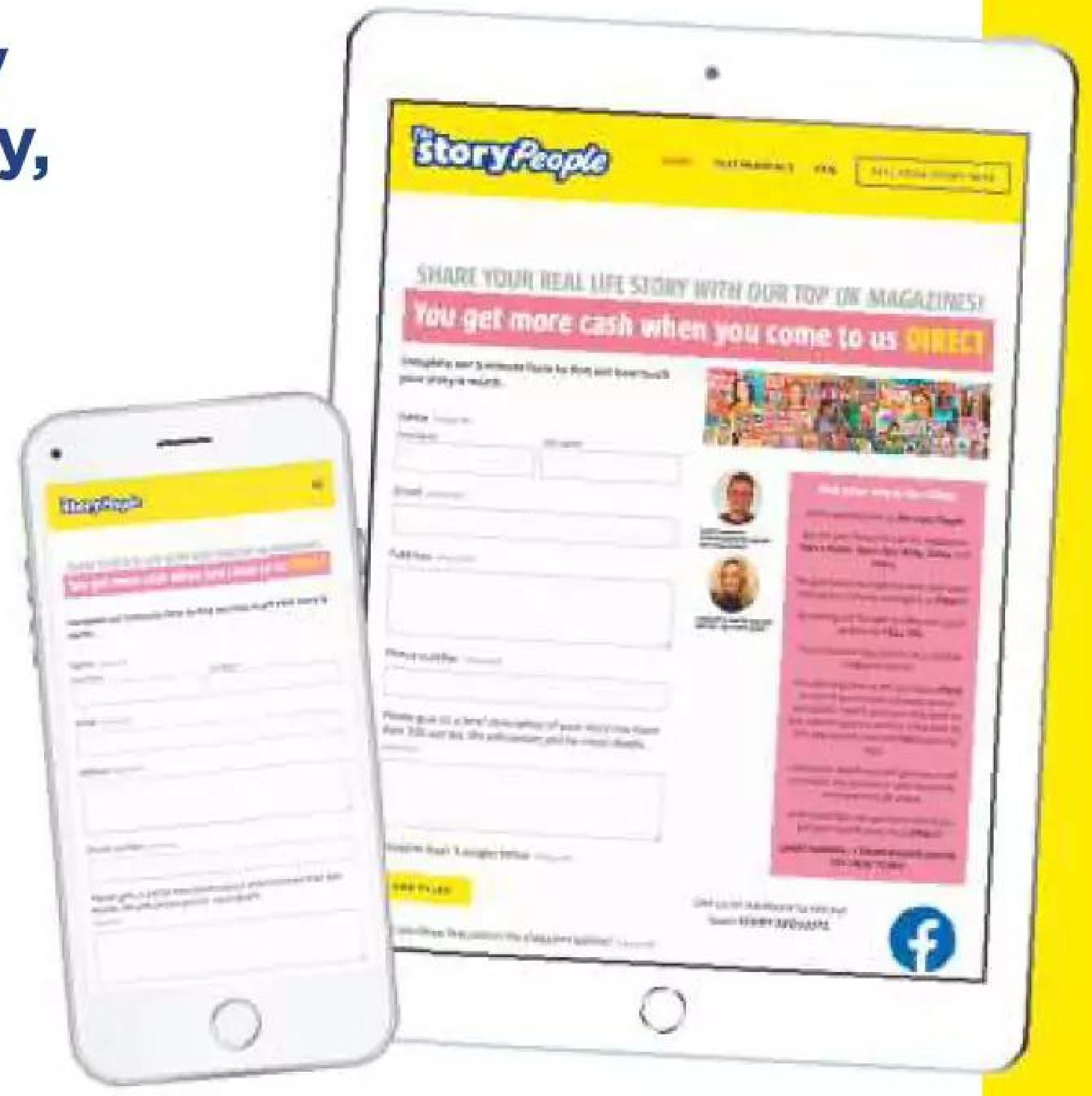

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MAKE A SPLASH

Feel confident on the beach in these slimming swimwear buys

Swimsuit, 6-22, Next, £42

Fuller bust friendly

Bikini top, 28D-38J, £42; **Briefs,** XS-2XL, £26, both Freya

Bikini top, 32DD-42G, £11; **Briefs,** 8-28, £9, both Matalan

Bikini top, 28D-38H, £44; **Briefs,** XS-3XL, £28, both Bravissimo

Swimsuit, 8-20, John Lewis, £45

Swimsuit, S-2XL, Curvy Kate, £60

Find your perfect fit up top with brands that cater to larger cup sizes. V-neck and wrap-over styles will also flatter larger breasts

Continued over the page...

Feel fabulous THIS SUMMER!

Tummy tamers

Tankini top, 10-28, £20; **Briefs,** 10-28, £14, both Bonmarché

Swimsuit, 10-28, Damart, £42

Swimsuit, 8-18, Pour Moi, £55

Swimsuit, 6-22, Next, £32

Swimsuit, 8-24, Marks & Spencer, £35

Secret tummy control will suck in your middle and streamline your silhouette so you can feel even more confident

Wrap stars

Swimsuit, 8-24, George at Asda, £16

Swimsuit, 10-24, Lascana at Freemans, £65

Swimsuit, 10-24, Bonprix, £29

Swimsuit, XS-XXL, Primark, £14

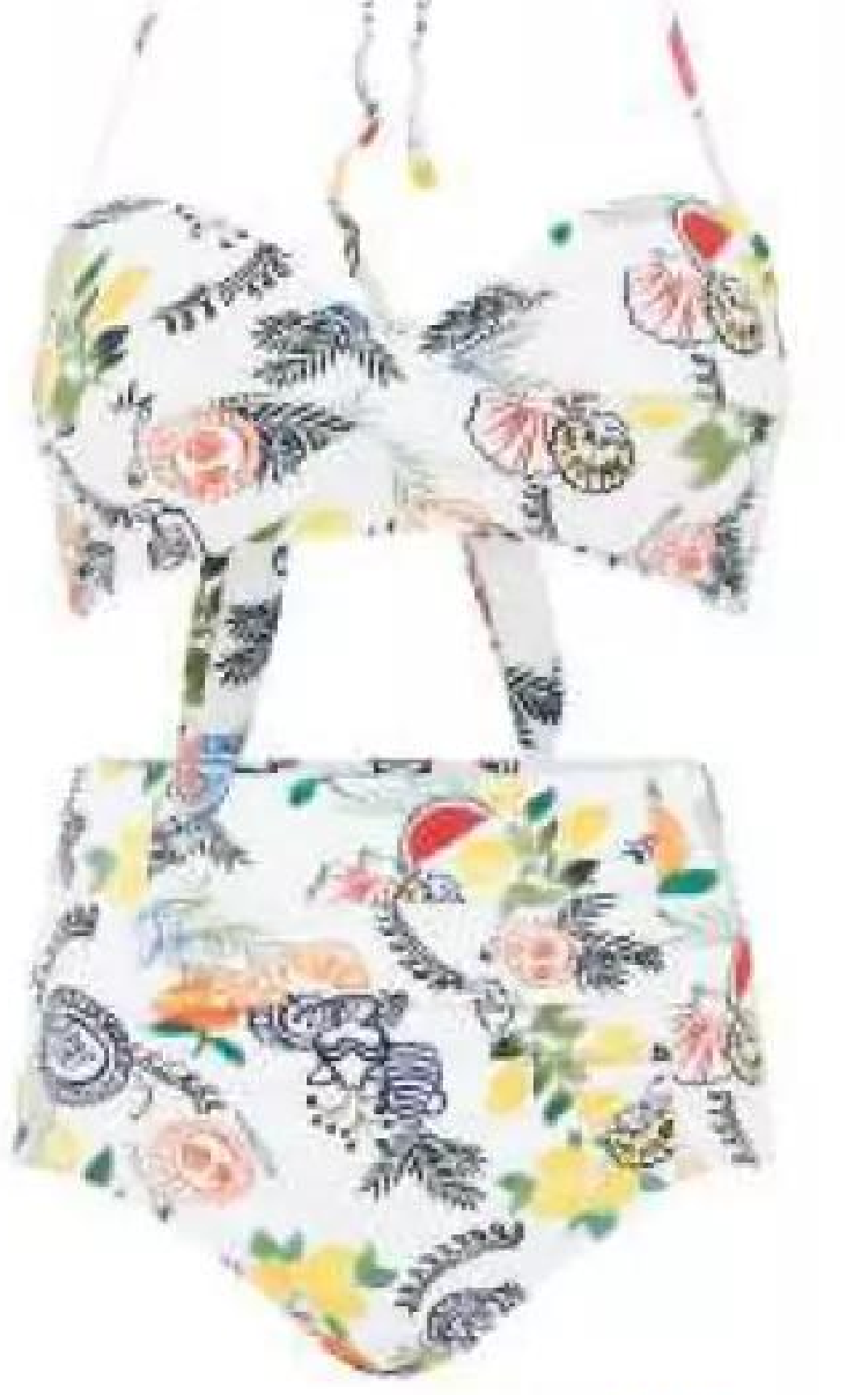
Swimsuit, 8-22, Tu at Sainsbury's, £18

Plunging necklines and side-tie detailing will draw attention to your waist for an instant slimming effect

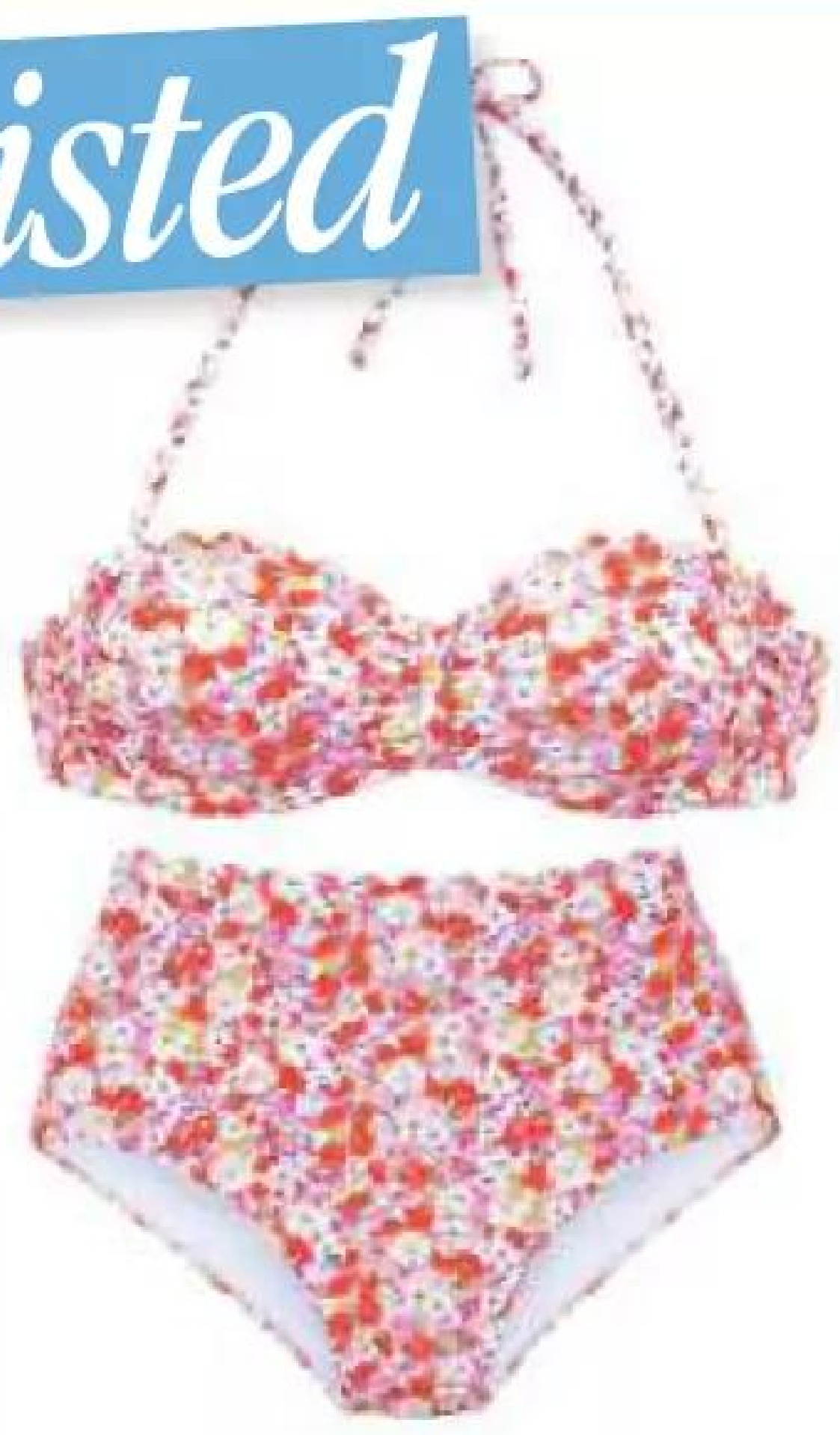
Bikini top, 32DD-42G, £11; **Briefs,** 8-28, £9, both Matalan

Tankini top, 28D-40L, £58; **Briefs,** XS-2XL, £24, both Bravissimo

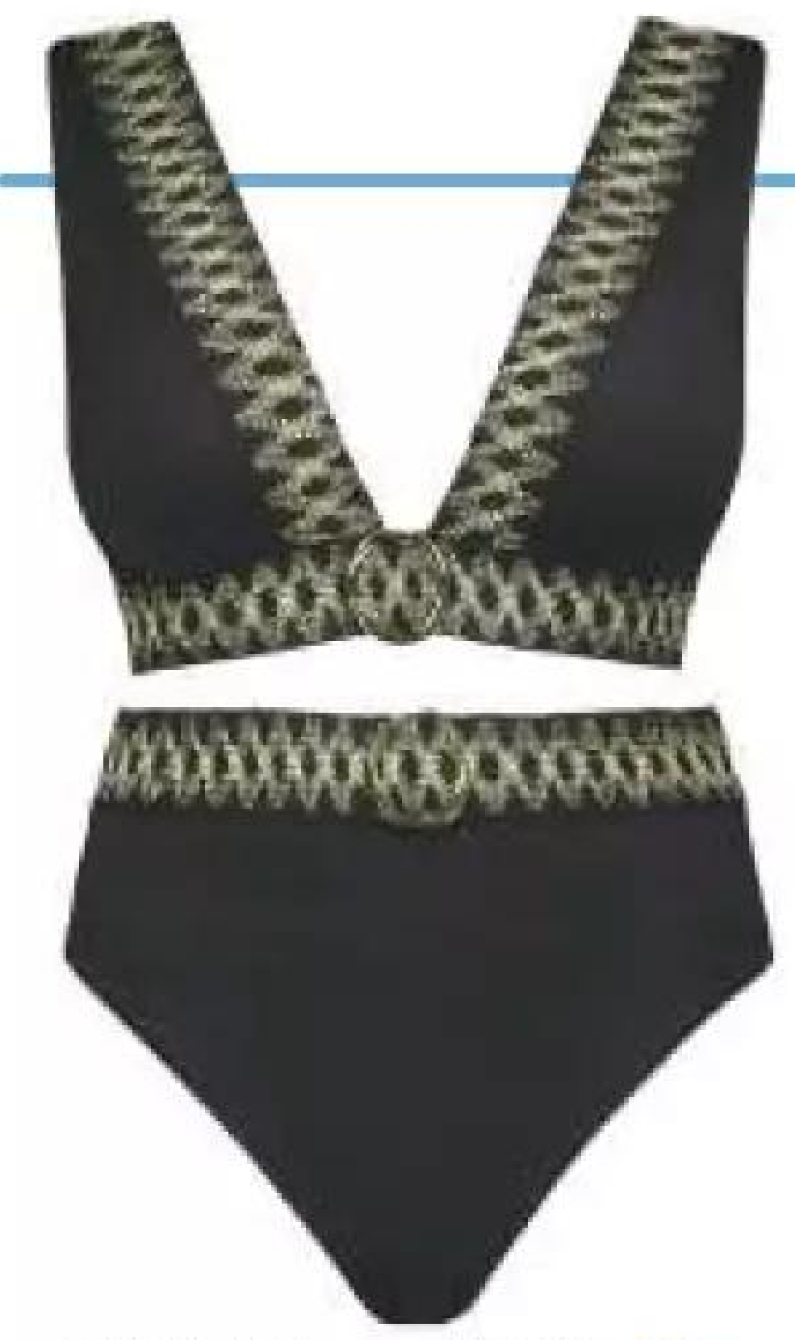
High-waisted heroes



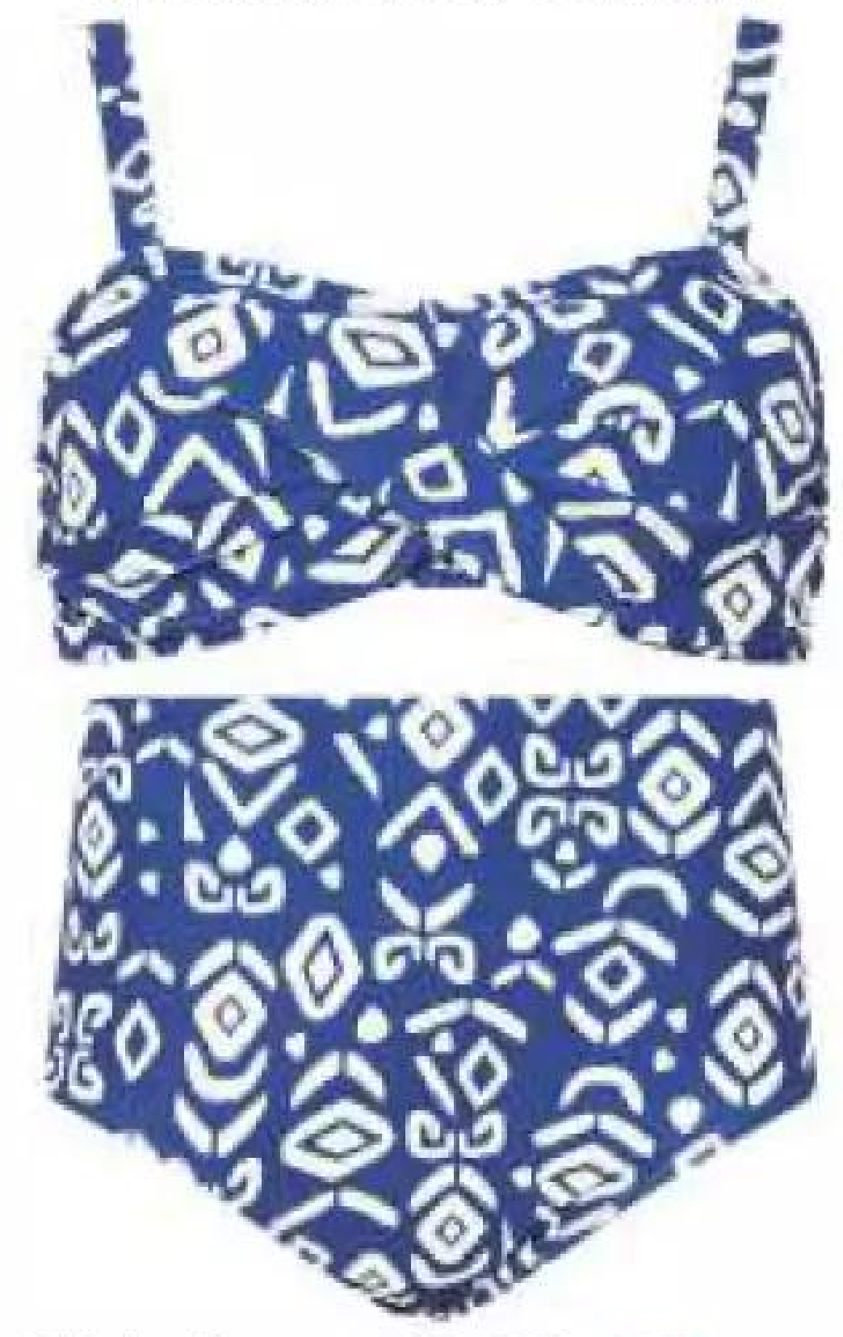
Bikini top, 8-20, £39; **Briefs,** 8-20, £29, both Phase Eight



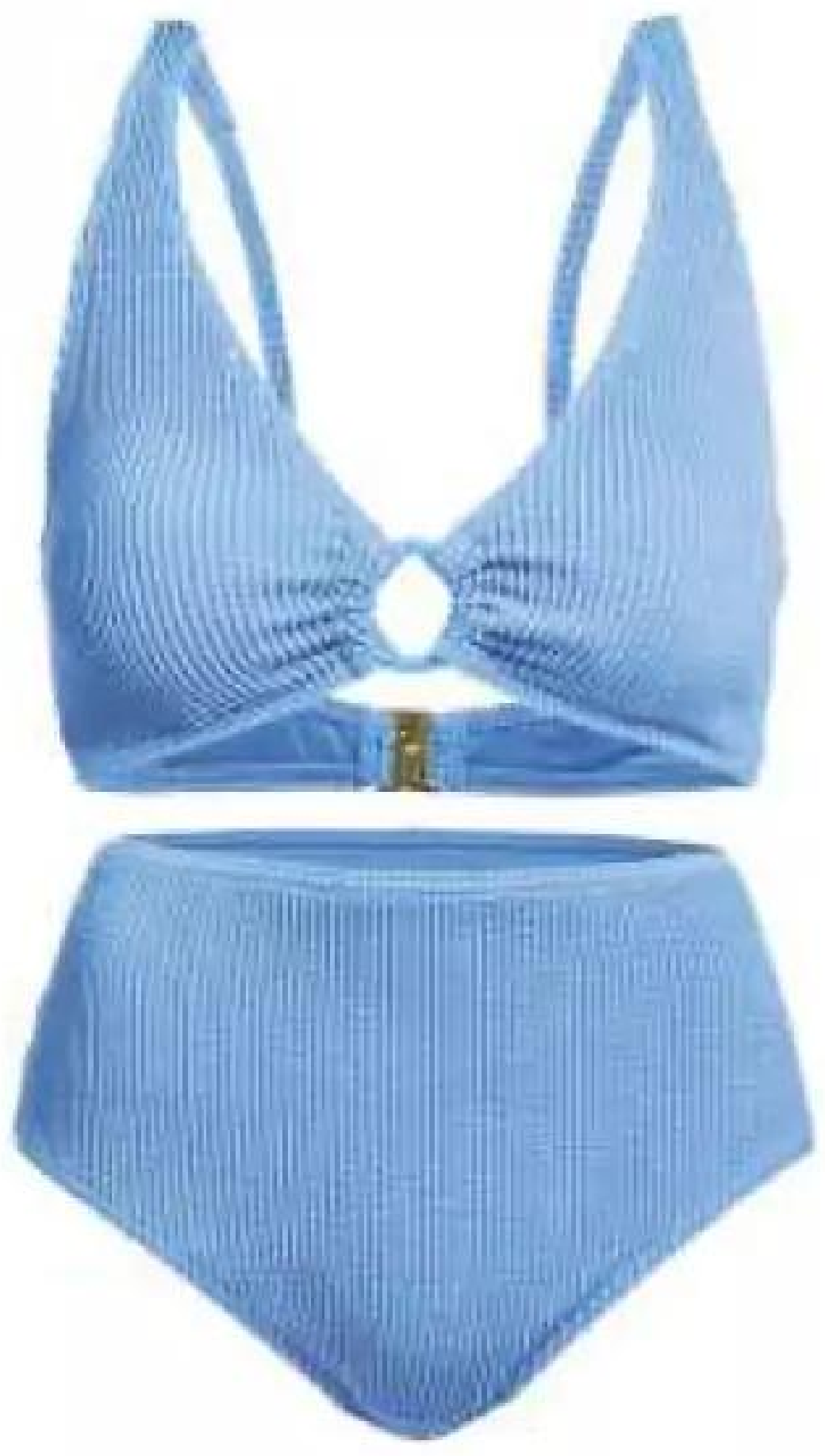
Bikini top, 6-18, £45; **Briefs,** 6-18, £38, both Lascana at Freemans



Bikini top, 6-22, £16; **Briefs,** 6-22, £10, both F&F at Tesco



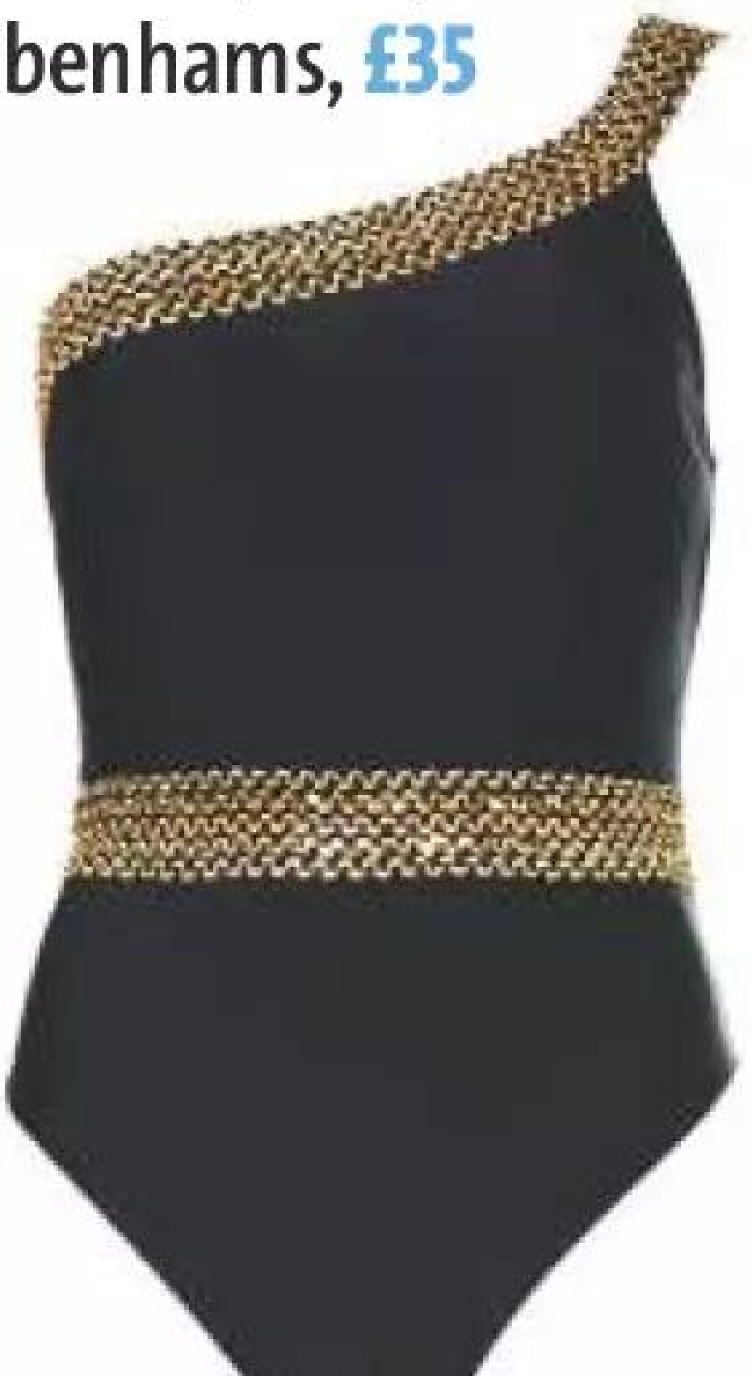
Bikini top, 10-20, £22; **Briefs,** 10-28, £16.50, both M&Co



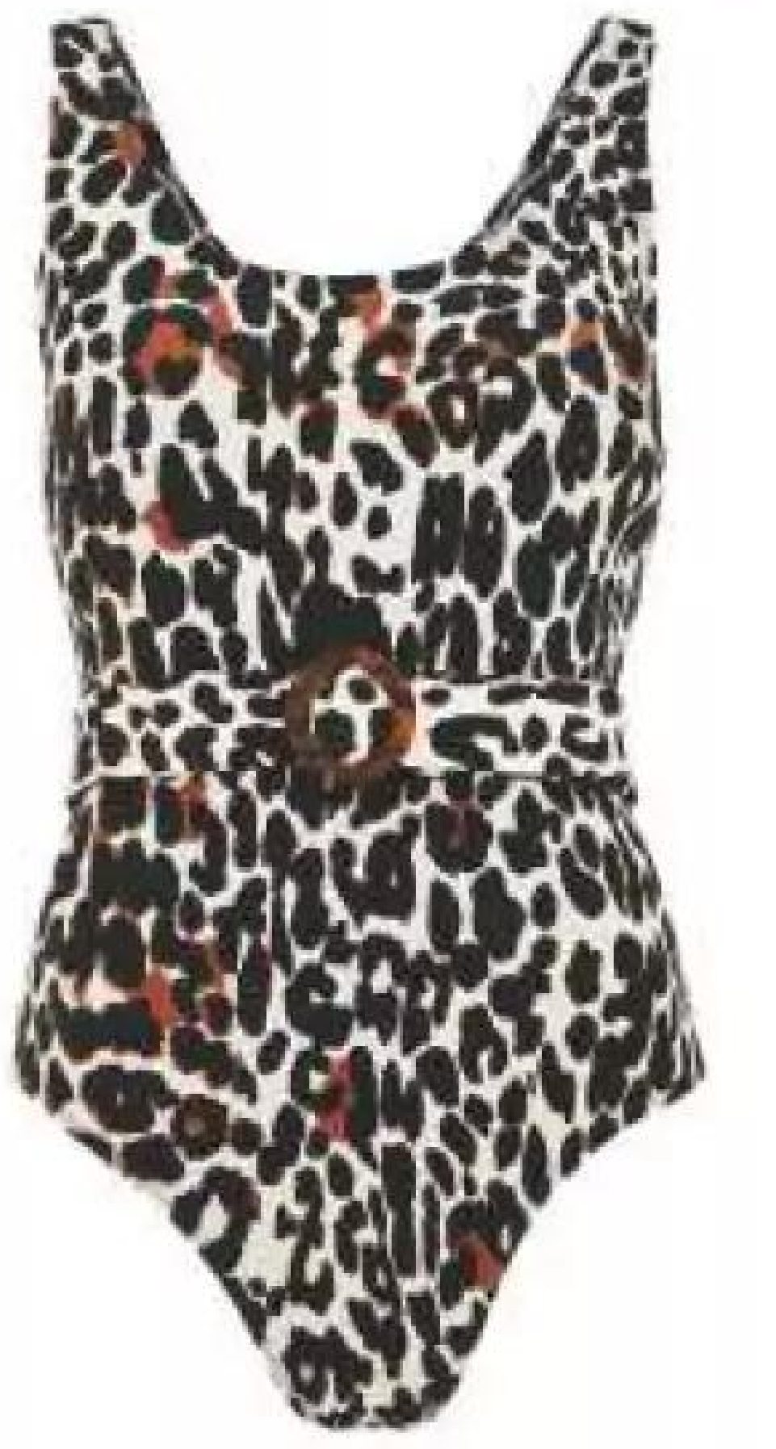
Bikini top, 8-22, £12.50; **Briefs,** 8-22, £9, both Tu at Sainsbury's

Conscious of your tum? High-waist briefs will provide more coverage while creating a flattering hourglass shape

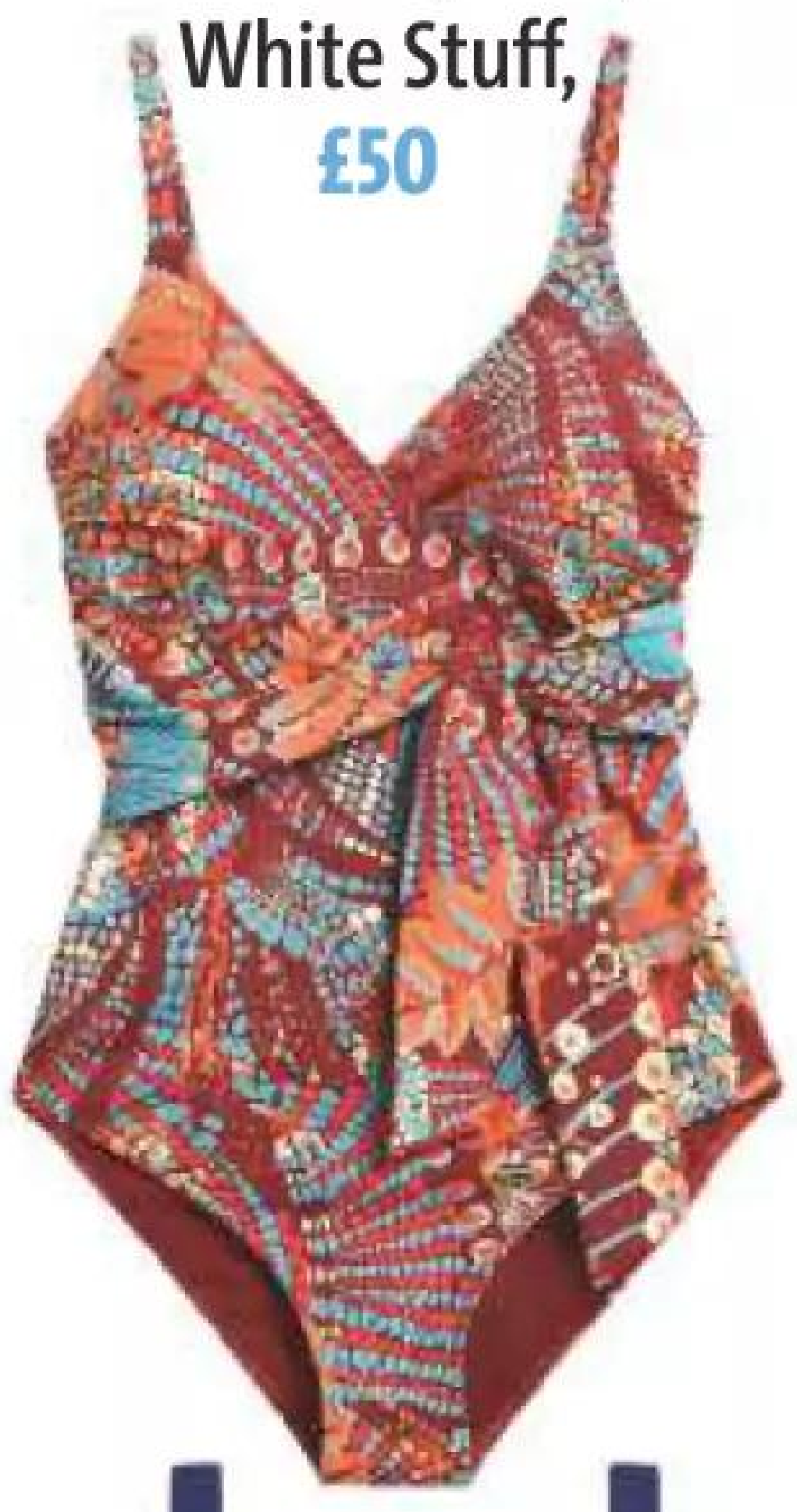
Waist-enhancing wonders



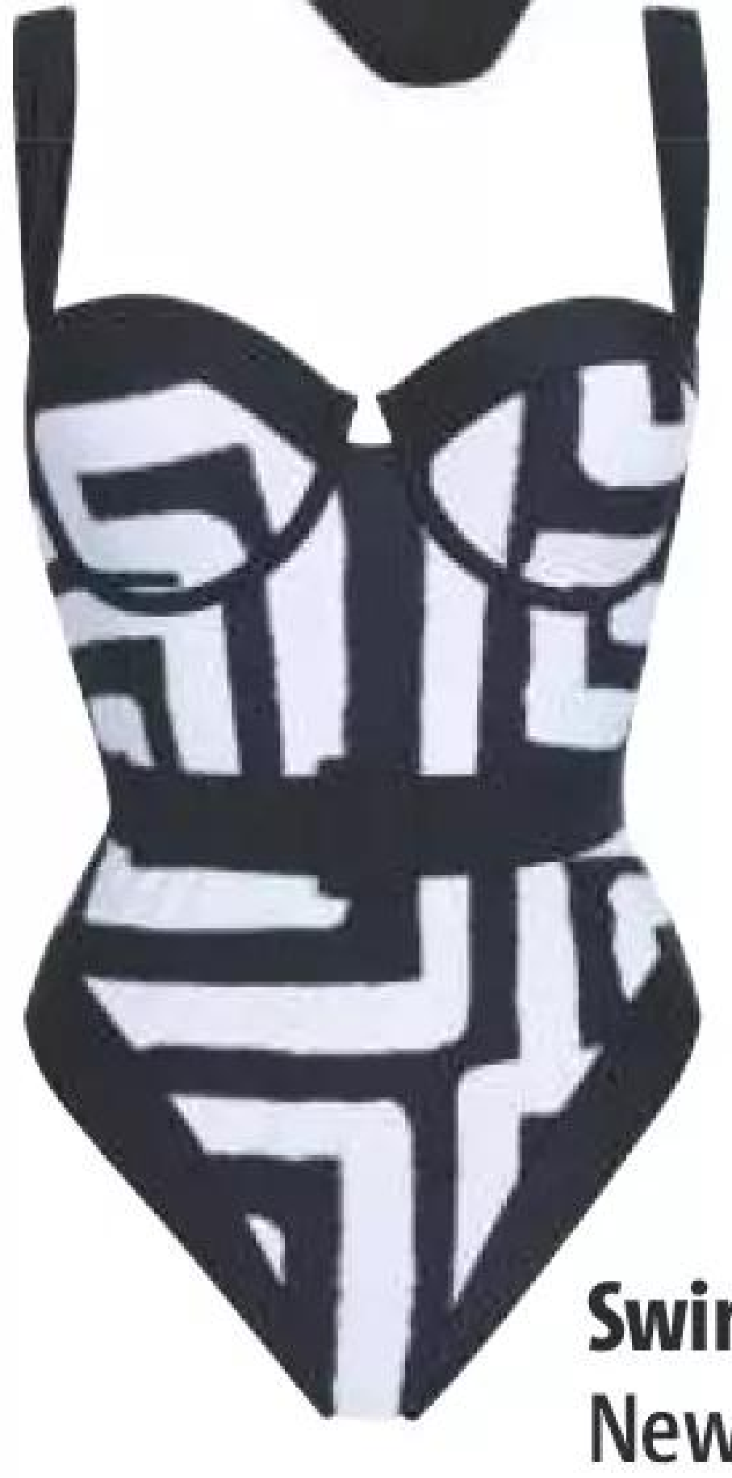
Swimsuit, 8-18, Debenhams, £35



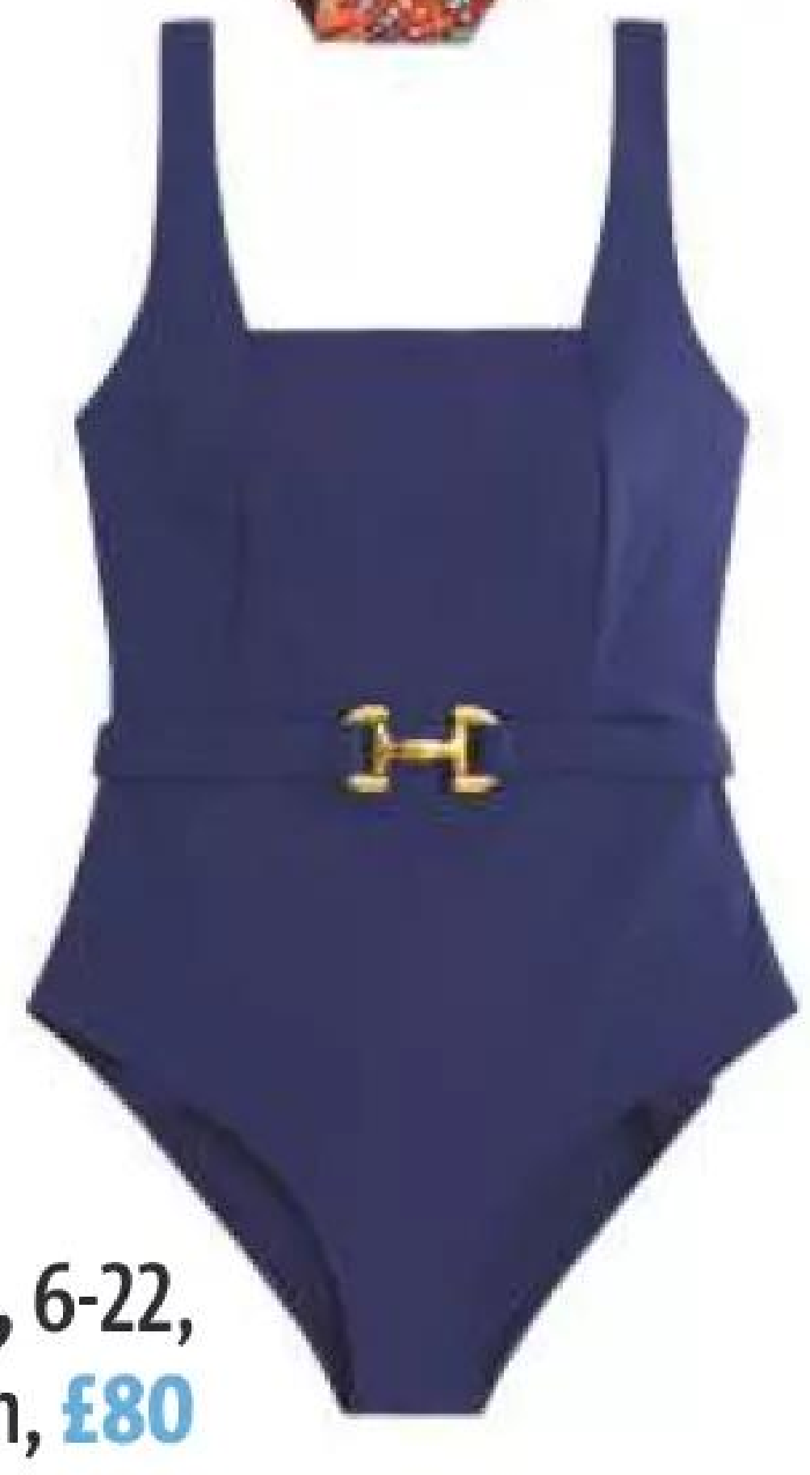
Swimsuit, 6-20, Phase Eight, £65



Swimsuit, 6-24, White Stuff, £50



Swimsuit, 32B-38DD, New Look, £32.99



Swimsuit, 6-22, Boden, £80

Belts draw attention to the smallest part of your torso, helping to create shape and structure

By Lauren Goodwin-Grafton

Get ready for summer

Our ultimate guide to warm-weather body confidence

Get a golden glow

A sun-kissed complexion can instantly lift your look, but uneven application can undo the effect. To ease into tanning, opt for a gradual tanner such as **Skin & Tan Body Glow Blush Gradual Everyday Tanning Lotion, £12.99**, which delivers a subtle colour with a skin-brightening shimmer for a natural-looking finish. For more dramatic results, try **Bondi Sands Ultra Express Self Tanning Foam, £19.99**, which develops within one hour. To avoid streaks, apply in upward, circular motions with a mitt, leaving hands and feet until last. For longer results, use a primer like **Isle of Paradise Prep It Primer, £15.95**, before tanning. This will help to keep limbs hydrated while balancing the skin's pH for even absorption.

ISLE OF PARADISE
PREP IT
SELF-TAN PRIMING SPRAY
bondi sands
The Australian tan
ULTRA DARK
ULTRA EXPRESS
COLOURLOCK ACCELERATOR
SKIN & TAN
BODY glow BLUSH
GRADUAL EVERYDAY SELF-TAN LOTION
Peach Kernel Oil
Guarana Extract
& Golden Shimmer
MEDIUM
Net 280 mL 9.4 FL OZ (US)

PALMER'S
COCOA BUTTER FORMULA
with Vitamin E
FIRMS TONES
FIRMING BODY LOTION
VISIBLY SMOOTHES & TIGHTENS
NEW! +Q10
48 HOUR MOISTURE
400 ml/ 13.5 fl.
YOUTHBOMB
BODY 360° REPAIR CONCENTRATE
ESPA
SKIN STIMULATING BODY BRUSH

Smooth uneven skin

Textured skin and cellulite are incredibly common, particularly over the age of 50, due to reduced collagen and slower cell turnover. However, regular exfoliation can minimise their appearance. Dry brushing encourages lymphatic drainage and boosts circulation before you shower, especially when followed by a firming cream. We recommend **ESPA Skin Stimulating Body Brush, £21**, and **Palmer's Cocoa Butter Formula Firming Body Lotion, £6.99**, which contains coenzyme Q10 to support skin repair and tone. For advanced care, **Beauty Pie Youthbomb Body 360° Repair Concentrate, £38**, harnesses retinol to target signs of ageing, including sun damage and fine lines. Apply using upward strokes to enhance absorption and stimulate blood flow.

Restore radiance

Dull skin is often caused by a build-up of dead cells. Exfoliating twice a week can help reveal brighter, smoother skin beneath. **Dove Crushed Macadamia & Rice Milk Body Scrub, £6.99**, offers gentle exfoliation along with a creamy scent that lingers post-shower. For a more intensive treatment, try a coarse scrub such as **Frank Body Original Coffee Scrub, £6.95**, which combines ground coffee beans and sea salt to smooth rough areas and enhance circulation, along with sweet almond oil to nourish new skin cells. Those with sensitive skin should try a chemical exfoliant which prevents the irritating friction caused by body scrubs. **Byoma Smoothing Body Polish, £13**, can be applied in the evening to target bumpy, uneven skin texture without harsh grains.

BYOMA
SMOOTHING BODY POLISH
Treats: Rough + Bumpy Skin
Prebiotic Complex + PHA + Panthenol
NEW
Dove
exfoliating body scrub
crushed macadamia & rice milk scent
"Guess what? You'll be naked in one minute."
ORIGINAL COFFEE SCRUB
LE VRAI GOMMAGE CAFÉ
frank body

Tackle body hair

As we tend to show more skin during the summer, some of us may choose to remove body hair. To avoid causing any irritation, always exfoliate skin the day before removing your hair. This will also help to release any ingrown hairs. For a quick fix, try shaving with **Estrid Razor Starter Kit, £9.95**. The next-gen razor contains five blades to help achieve the closest shave possible. For longer-lasting results, opt for waxing. **Veet Expert Wax Strips, £7.99**, are easy to use and will extract hairs from the root for a smooth finish. Post-treatment, soothe skin with **Aveeno Skin Relief Lotion, £10**. The oat-based formula helps calm inflammation and replenish moisture.

ESTRID
The Razor Starter Kit
Le set de rasage doux
NOW RECYCLABLE PUMP
Aveeno
SKIN RELIEF
MOISTURISING LOTION
intensely hydrates & helps heal very dry skin
72h
Recyclable Bottle & Pump
300ml
Veet
EXPERT wax strips
NORMAL SKIN
LEGS & BODY
20
WAX STRIPS
Veet
wipe

By Emma Hawkins, Pictures Getty Images

More of the songs you love

Magic

Premium

Magic
Magic Breakfast with Ronan & Harriet
Listen Live
Magic Radio
One Love
Bob Marley and The Wailers
Magic Soul
Got To Get You Into My Life
Earth Wind and Fire
Magic Chilled
Too Much
Spice Girls
Mellow Magic
Sailing
Rod Stewart
Magic at the Musicals
Magic Radio
ne Love by Bob Marley and The Wa
Home
Stations
Shows
My List
Settings

- Ad-Break Free Radio
- Skip Tracks Live*
- New Exclusive Stations

FREE 30 DAY TRIAL
magic.co.uk

Terms and conditions apply *Skip up to six tracks per hour

Get Your Greens

Supercharge your beauty routine with these nourishing buys

ORIGINS
DRINK UP INTENSIVE
Overnight Hydrating Mask with Avocado & Swiss Glacier Water

Overnight Wonder

Deeply hydrate skin while you snooze with a leave-on face mask that's enriched with avocado and glacier water. The ingredients work to plump skin with moisture, for a visibly renewed complexion come morning. **Origins Drink Up Intensive Overnight Hydrating Mask, £28**

KIEHL'S
CREAMY EYE TREATMENT
with Avocado

Eye Opener

The skin around our eye area is much more delicate, therefore benefits from a dedicated eye cream. Treat yourself to an ultra-creamy formula that uses avocado and shea butter to provide intensive moisture. **Kiehl's Creamy Eye Treatment with Avocado, £30**

MARIO BADESCU
SKIN CARE
Established 1967
FACIAL SPRAY WITH ALOE, CUCUMBER AND GREEN TEA
2 fl oz (59 ml)

Magic Mist

A facial spritz is a quick and easy way to rejuvenate your complexion. This aloe vera, cucumber and green tea mist delivers a burst of refreshing moisture. It can also be used as a make-up setting spray. **Mario Badescu Facial Spray With Aloe, Cucumber And Green Tea, from £6**

TROPIC
SUPER GREENS
nutrient boost oil
vitamin C, tamanu, kale and broccoli seed oils
CERTIFIED ORGANIC

Q+A
APPLE AHA
Exfoliating Gel
75ml 2.5fl.oz

Smooth Operator

This exfoliator combines the naturally occurring malic acid, found in apples, with lactic and glycolic acids to gently refine uneven texture. Massage a thin layer into skin before rinsing off to reveal a brighter complexion. **Q+A Apple AHA Exfoliating Gel, £9**

Skin Strengthener

Load up on the antioxidant-rich benefits of broccoli, kale and avocado with this pollutant-fighting face oil. Massage three to six drops into your skin to keep it looking radiant and feeling resilient. **Tropic Super Greens Nutrient Boost Oil, £44**

GLOW RECIPE
AVOCADO CERAMIDE MOISTURE BARRIER CLEANSER
NOURISHING + MAKEUP-REMOVING
150 ml | 5 fl.oz

sukin
AUSTRALIAN • NATURAL
SUPER GREENS
NUTRIENT RICH FACIAL MOISTURISER
NORMAL TO DRY SKIN TYPES
125mL / 4.23fl.oz.

Glow Getter

Boost your routine with a lightweight moisturiser that's brimming with kale, spirulina and parsley. The nutrient-packed greens hydrate and nourish, leaving skin with a healthy-looking glow. **Sukin Super Greens Facial Moisturiser, £10**

Green Clean

Melt away make-up and impurities while delivering long-lasting hydration. Thanks to a blend of avocado oil, oatmeal and ceramides, this cleanser visibly soothes and strengthens your skin barrier. **Glow Recipe Avocado Ceramide Moisture Barrier Cleanser, £25.31**

Lanolips
101 OINTMENT

Lip Service

Keep your pout looking plump with a fruit-fuelled balm. Antioxidant-rich apple extracts fight harmful environmental elements and pollutants to keep your lips feeling soft and supple. **Lanolips 101 Ointment Multi-Balm Green Apple, £8.99**

By Emma White

Staycation swaps

Forget flying! These UK holidays look and feel just like you're abroad

Isle of Harris, Scotland

The Isle of Harris, in Scotland's Outer Hebrides, has powdery white beaches and teal waters that rival the Caribbean – just without the humidity. Luskentyre Beach is the showstopper, backed by dunes and mountains. It's perfect for kayaking, cycling or seal-spotting boat trips. Base yourself at Luskentyre Beach Cabins, a collection of stylish Scandi-inspired retreats just steps from the shore. Each cabin is designed for tranquillity, with floor-to-ceiling windows, underfloor heating, and panoramic views. Watch the sun set from your private deck, then stargaze from the comfort of your bed.

- **Prices from £185 per night at luskentyrebeachcabins.co.uk**

Housel Bay Hotel offers breathtaking views of the Cornish coast

Lizard Point, Cornwall

Who needs the Med when you've got white-sand beaches and turquoise seas in the UK? Cornwall's Lizard Point is postcard-perfect, with its crystal-clear waters and dramatic rock stacks. Spend time swimming, paddleboarding or exploring hidden coves, then refuel at a local beach café with fresh seafood and Cornish ice cream. Stay at Housel Bay Hotel, a charming clifftop retreat with sea-view rooms, elegant interiors and a slow-food restaurant that champions home-grown produce. As well as direct access to the secluded sands of Housel Beach, enjoy front-row seats to Atlantic sunsets.

- **Doubles from £165 per night at houselbay.com**

White sands, turquoise seas...

La dolce vita, Welsh style

Portmeirion, North Wales

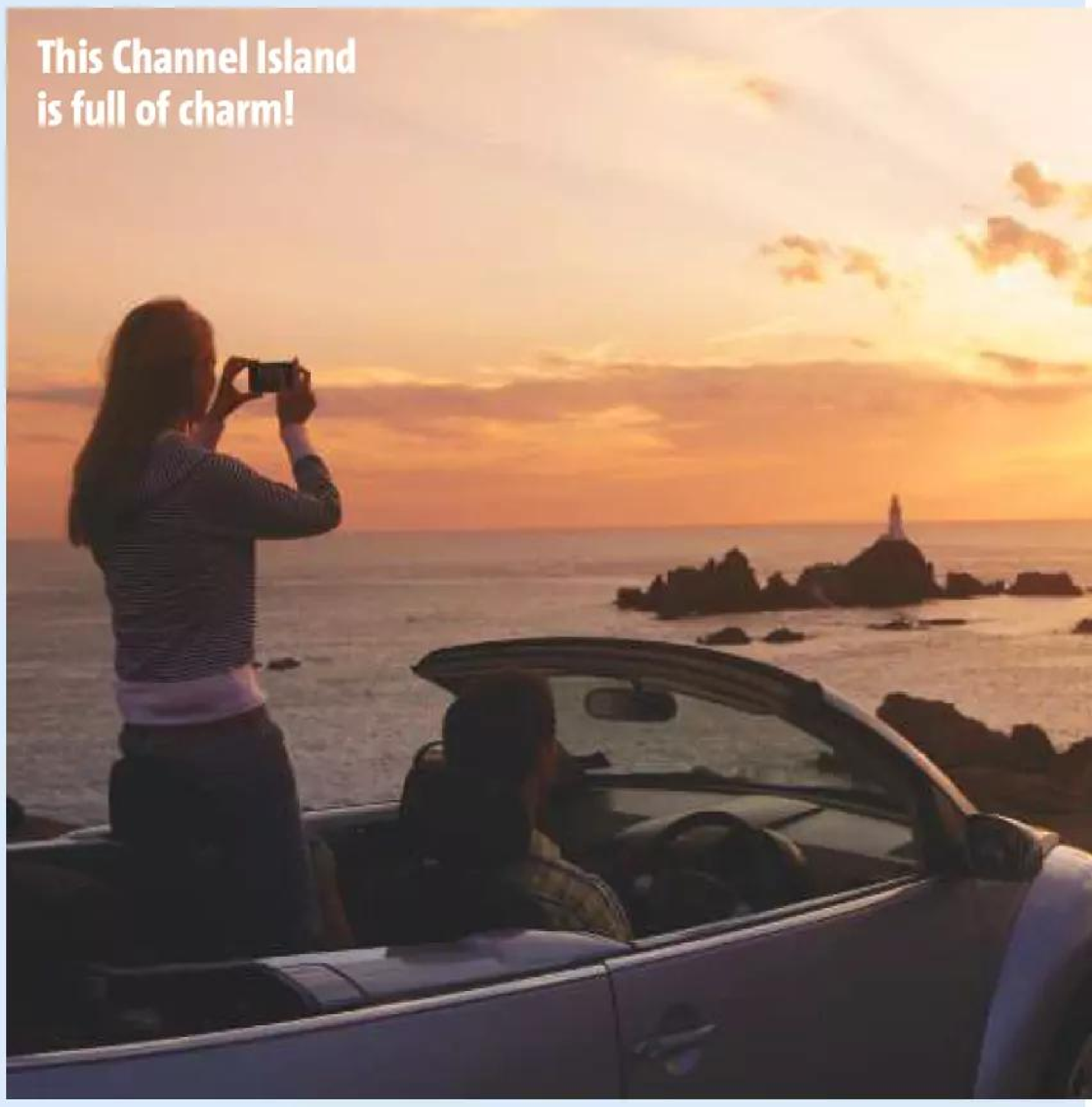
A colourful Italian-style village in North Wales, Portmeirion is packed with charm for all ages. Kids will love exploring the winding paths, playful architecture, and hidden nooks that feel like a real-life fairy tale. There are woodlands to roam, tide-filled beaches to paddle, and even a giant chessboard to play on. Meanwhile, adults can unwind in the on-site spa, savour fine dining and soak up scenic views. Stay in boutique rooms or family-friendly self-catering cottages, all set among pastel buildings and subtropical gardens.

● **A Village Room starts at £109 for two people, including breakfast. Book at portmeirion.wales**

Jersey, Channel Islands

Jersey may sit closer to France than the UK, but it blends both beautifully – picture cliffside walks, beach cafés serving moules-frites, and soft white sands at St Brelade's Bay that feel lifted from the Riviera. Okay, it's not quite the UK – it's a Crown Dependency – but we're giving it honorary staycation status. Check in to the elegant St Brelade's Bay Hotel, a seaside classic with '50s charm, manicured gardens, and a health club featuring a gym, spa and pool. After exploring Second World War tunnels or shopping in St Helier, unwind with sea views from the sun terrace or heated outdoor pool.

● **Rooms are available from £97. Bookable at stbreladesbayhotel.com**



This Channel Island is full of charm!

Your home on wheels awaits

Scottish Highlands

Scenery that rivals the Alps? Head to the Scottish Highlands. The North Coast 500 is a road trip through rugged peaks, ancient lochs and sweeping coastlines. Expect dolphin spotting at Chanonry Point, castle hopping in Wester Ross and whisky tasting in Brora. For ultimate freedom, hire your home on wheels from Go North Campers in Inverness – think stylish interiors, built-in kitchenettes and cosy beds. Wake up beside deserted beaches, cook dinner overlooking lakes and chase the Northern Lights at your own pace.

● **GoNorthCampers.com has a range of vehicles to suit solo travellers, couples and families, with rates starting at £105 per night.**

By Emma Hawkins, **Pictures** Getty, Shutterstock

‘My sister’s death made me change my ways & lose 8s

When Pam McCloud, 58, lost her beloved older sister Susan, she knew she finally had to address her health concerns…

BEFORE
20st 9lb
Size 28-32

Pam was stuck in bad habits

Scooping mashed potatoes on to my plate next to the beef and veg, my mum said, ‘Eat up.’ But while I cleared my plate, my older sister Susan left most of hers untouched. She sadly had Crohn’s disease, and it caused cramps after eating, so, I always polished off whatever Susan couldn’t finish. Netball, football and squash helped me to burn off all the extra calories but when I was 21, I tore a ligament in my knee and it put an end to sport. I started to gain weight and went from a size 12 to a size 14-16.

In 1995 I met my husband Keith and we became parents to Harriet, now 25, followed by William, now 22. I ate for two during my pregnancies and jumped to an 18-20. Takeaways became a weekend habit. We’d order a Chinese and I’d have curry, rice and spare ribs but it was never enough and later I’d raid the fridge for pork pies and sausage rolls. The savoury treats were my favourite and I couldn’t stop eating them.

Then tragically in March 1997, Mum was killed in a car accident. She was just 62. Then the next day, my grandad passed away. Overwhelmed with grief, I turned to food for comfort and over the years, my weight kept creeping up. Then, Susan shockingly passed away aged 54 in 2015 after a double brain hemorrhage. The grief was all-consuming and I was diagnosed with stress-induced psoriasis. I looked and felt terrible. Doughnuts and chocolate cake became a daily comfort.

Grief made her turn to comfort food

Now she feels better than ever

st'
AFTER
13st 3lb
Size 12-14

She's kept the weight off

Seven years later, when I'd reached the same age Susan was when she died, I knew I had to change my ways or I'd end up in an early grave. By now, I wore size 28-32 elasticated trousers.

Then, in July 2022 I came across a weight-loss programme called Noom. I downloaded the app and read that Noom used a psychology-based approach to weight loss, focusing on understanding and changing unhealthy habits through interactive lessons, tracking, and personal coaching. The programme encouraged a calorie deficit and used a colour-coded system to categorise foods based on nutritional value and calorific density. It sounded perfect for me so I signed up.

At home in Northampton, I stepped on the scales and was horrified to learn that I weighed 21st 9lb. I immediately went cold turkey on takeaways and knew I had to stop snacking. I started munching on carrots and celery instead of crumpets and pork pies. For breakfast, I'd have porridge with banana or gluten-free granola and, for lunch, I'd have houmous with a boiled egg, vegetables and fruit. For dinner, I'd serve up stew with a side of salad or have a plate of chicken and potatoes. And instead of my usual after-dinner dessert of apple pie and custard, I'd have a handful of chocolate rice cakes. In my first week, I lost an incredible 8lb which really spurred me on. I took my dogs for long walks, and each week I shifted a couple more pounds. Within nine months my psoriasis had disappeared, my hair felt glossier, and I had more energy.

Two years after signing up, in 2024, I'd lost an amazing 8st 6lb and could wear a size 12-14. Now, I've maintained my 13st 3lb weight for a year. I eat small portions and, if I'm craving something sweet, I'll just have a chocolate rice cake.

Susan would be proud of how far I've come. She inspired me to make the change and now I feel better than ever.

DIET BEFORE

BREAKFAST Crumpets with butter and jam
LUNCH Sandwich with crisps, pork pie and sausage rolls
DINNER Roast chicken with potatoes and veg, plus apple pie and custard
SNACKS Cake, chocolate digestives

DIET AFTER

BREAKFAST Porridge with banana, gluten-free granola
LUNCH Houmous with boiled egg, vegetables and fruit
DINNER Stew with salad, chicken and potatoes
SNACKS Chocolate rice cake, banana, apple

By Safia Yallaoui and Matthew Barbour

Zoe: ‘Therapy has GAME-CHANGER FOR ME’

Comedian Zoe Lyons, 53, on surviving her midlife crisis, coping with alopecia and taking control of the menopause

Exercise keeps her stress in check

She regularly has huge audiences in stitches with her stand-up show, *Werewolf*, and impressed viewers on *SAS Who Dares Wins*, but Zoe Lyons readily admits she suffers from nerves.

‘Self-doubt is my constant companion,’ she tells us. ‘People assume stand-up comedians are massively confident, but actually most of us aren’t. We just learn how to work with the nerves and insecurities. The trick is being able to harness those nerves and turn them into good energy.’

Zoe, 53, does this by trying to ground herself. ‘It sounds silly, but I think about my feet,’ she explains. ‘When you’re nervous, all the energy and tension comes up into your chest and face. You feel it in your heart, and you feel your jaw clenching. It gravitates up, so I trick myself physiologically, to think downward.

‘I think of my feet and think, “I’m really strong and I’m planted on the ground.” It helps draw physical attention away from those nerves and makes me feel more solid.’

Zoe with her wife, Sindy

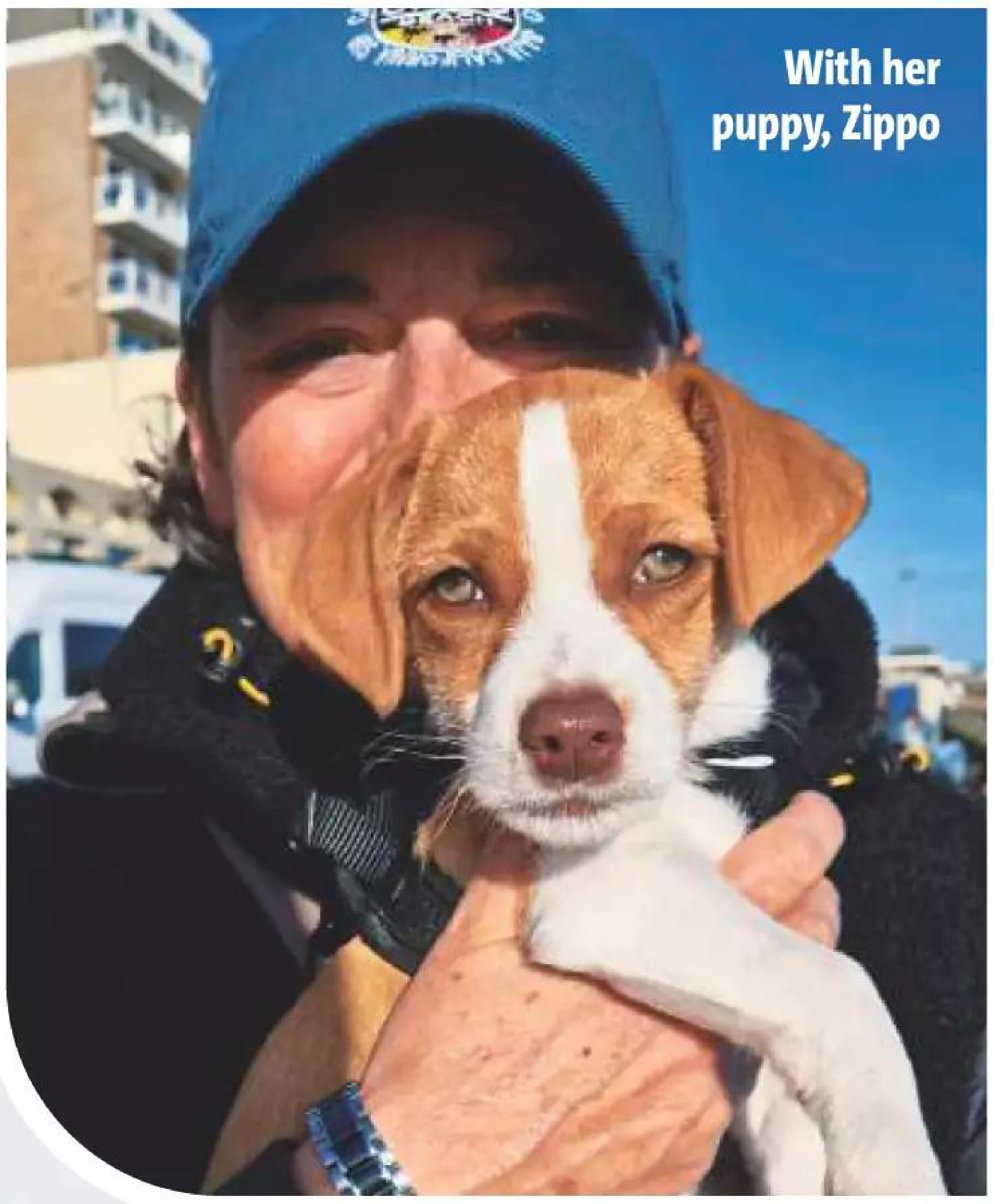
Try Therapy

Zoe has talked openly about suffering a midlife crisis during lockdown, which led to her temporarily separating from wife Sindy. ‘I hit a wall mentally,’ she says. ‘It was the culmination of many things. The world was in crisis and work stopped, socialising stopped, everything stopped. I bought two sports cars and I’d drive around Brighton with the roof down, it was utterly clichéd.’

Zoe sought help from a therapist, and she reveals she now looks on lockdown as a gift.

‘Had this great halt not happened, I would have ploughed on miserably for another few years before the wheels really fell off,’ she says. ‘For first time in my life, I sought professional help, and I got a therapist. It was a game-changer, and it helped me get through that period.’

been a



With her puppy, Zippo

Reap The Rewards Of Cold Water

Zoe, who stars on *QI* and *Mock The Week*, says cold water swimming also helped her navigate those tough times. 'My friend Mark and I swam in the sea in Brighton through one winter, and it was an incredible reset,' she says. 'It really gets you out of thinking and ruminating and into your body, it helps you to mentally reset and it also changes your perspective. I fell out of swimming this winter, but I'll start again once the water warms up and then I'll keep going next winter. You have to train and get used to the temperature as it's dropping. I wear a bikini and a bobble hat; you can imagine the St Tropez beach body look. It's unique.'

> 'You have to laugh about it'

Keep Talking About Menopause

Like so many women in their early fifties, Zoe is contending with the menopause but refuses to let it get the better of her. 'I talk about the menopause in my stand-up show, *Werewolf*,' she says. 'Ten years ago, people might have got up and walked out, but there is so much more discussion about it now and that's great. I found my levels of motivation really changed, which is alarming when you've always been highly motivated. A lot of women hit menopause and midlife and, if you're not careful, you can feel like you just disappear. But you owe it to yourself to push through.'

For Zoe, pushing through means touring, even though it's challenging at times. 'It's tricky to be a comedian or on a panel show and discover you have brain fog,' she quips. 'But by talking about the menopause and acknowledging it, you take control of it. You take the negative power out of it and give it some positive power.'

Exercise To Bust Stress

Zoe has talked openly about her battle with alopecia areata, an autoimmune condition that causes her hair to fall out when she's stressed. 'When I was about 11 my parents divorced, we moved to Glasgow and half my hair fell out,' she says. 'It grew back, but then the turmoil of a midlife crisis, menopause and the pandemic meant it fell out again. I lost about 85%, which knocked my confidence hugely.'

Conscious that she was about to film game show *Lightning* and *The Antiques Roadshow*, Zoe invested in a 'very expensive' wig. 'It helped, but my first two bits of filming were outside in howling wind,' she recalls. 'I thought it might take off. What are the chances of going bald, getting a wig and filming outside in strong wind? You have to laugh about it.'

While Zoe says she's 'incredibly lucky' that her hair has grown back, she's doubled down on running and CrossFit, to keep stress in check. 'Exercise is my go-to stress reliever, I do it five times a week,' she says. 'CrossFit has been lifechanging. It's perfectly suited to my brain, because it's a different workout every time. It's also a real community, which I love. I make them laugh, because I'm usually face planting at some point.'

● *Zoe Lyons is touring a new stand-up tour Werewolf across the UK. Visit zoelyons.co.uk*

By Neeru Sharma, **Pictures** Instagram

CELEB FRIDGE

Former hockey player and TV show host Sam Quek, 36, on her eating habits…

'My favourite drink is Diet Coke'
'I make a lot of one-pot meals'
'I'm all about salty, tangy flavours'

How much do you spend?

Around £100 per week. I do all my food shopping at Tesco, purely for convenience – it's only about two miles down the road.

Describe your daily diet...

I've never been much of a breakfast person. I start my day with a black coffee and plenty of water, and I don't eat anything until around 11am. It's usually something simple like sourdough toast with scrambled eggs and avocado. Lunch tends to be a bit of a free-for-all, depending on what I've got in or what I fancy. But dinner? That's where things get stressful – trying to figure out what to cook for the kids [Molly, three and Isaac, two] every day is a job in itself! I usually end up eating a version of whatever they're having. I make a lot of easy one-pot meals like chilli con carne, fajitas, lasagne and chicken curry.

Anything you refuse to eat?

I don't like aniseed-based foods like fennel and liquorice. Just the smell makes me feel ugh.

What would you cook to impress?

Chinese food! I'm a huge rice snob, so it has to be perfectly cooked – fluffy, well-seasoned, no clumpy disasters! I'd probably make black pepper steak, some siu mai, and a few other dim sum bits.

INSIDE SAM'S FRIDGE

- Butter
- Yogurts
- Strawberries
- Blueberries
- Raspberries
- Kimchi
- Mayonnaise
- Hot sauce
- Fish
- Chicken thighs
- Mince meat
- Carrots
- Lettuce
- Tomatoes
- Onions
- Salad cream
- Milk
- Mustard
- Buffalo sauce
- Broccoli
- Diet Coke

Strangest thing you've eaten?

Because I'm half Chinese, a lot of the dim sum I grew up with seems strange to some – things like beef tripe, whelks, baby octopus.

● *Soccer Aid for UNICEF takes place on Sunday 15 June at Old Trafford. Adult tickets start from £20 and juniors from £10: socceraid.org.uk/tickets*

FAVOURITE TAKEAWAY

KEBAB

I'm currently in my kebab era, they're so delicious. I love them.

HANGOVER CURE

CRISPY CHICKEN ROLL

Southern fried chicken roll with mayo, lettuce and loads of buffalo sauce.

COMFORT FOOD

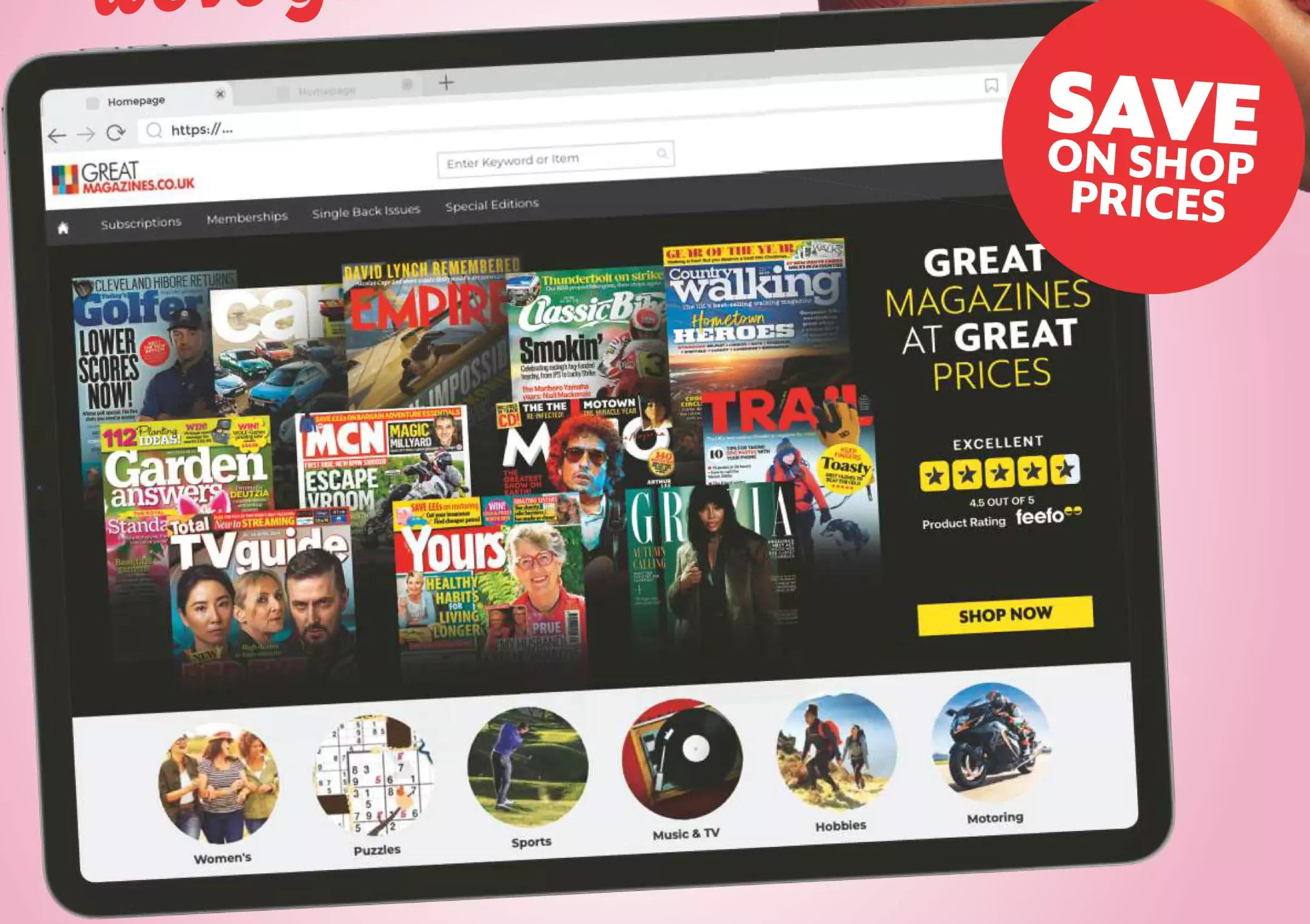
CHIPS

They need to be drenched in vinegar. I could eat them every day.

By Helena Holdsworth Pictures Shutterstock

Time to treat yourself?

we've got it covered



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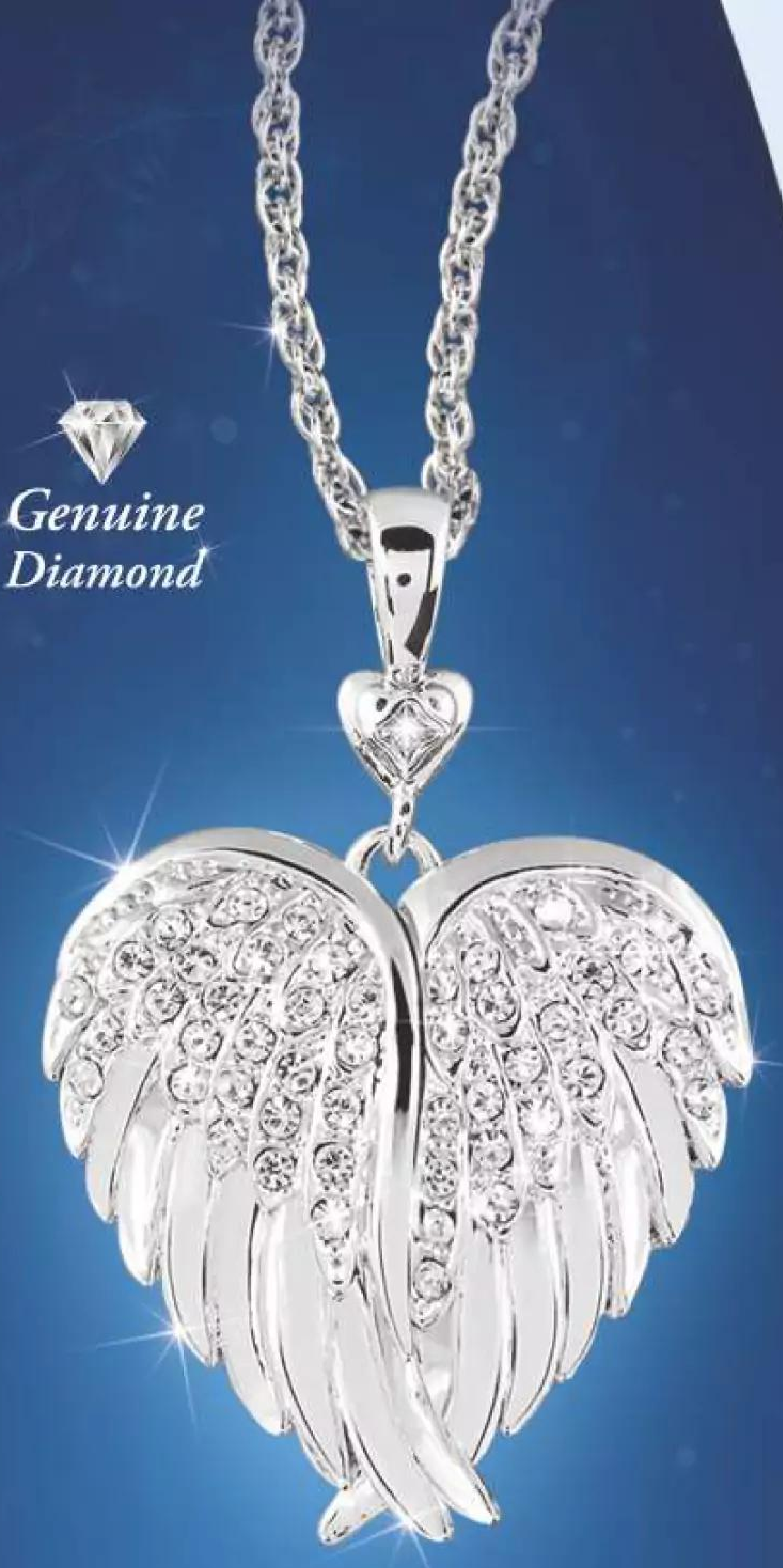

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